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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000c682>

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**The National Library of Wales and National Identity, c.1840-1916**

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**The National Library of Wales**

**Funded by The Arts and Humanities Research Council**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2017**

## **Abstract**

This thesis evaluates the National Library of Wales (NLW) from conception to realisation. It adds to the limited existing work on the library by positioning it within the political and cultural environment from which it emerged, posing new questions about its relationship with Welsh national identity. Although there is some work which looks at national identity in relation to national library projects, nothing of this type and depth has been done before, and not in relation to Wales.

The first section investigates the early calls for a NLW and explores why the campaign made significant progress from the 1890s. The focus then shifts to an interrogation of the British government's decision to locate the library in Aberystwyth, challenging the important role previously assigned to the campaign group's application. Chapter three analyses the library building fund's subscription drive and argues that the campaign was not the result of a mass movement, but orchestrated by a group of elites. It evaluates the decision made by the library campaign committee to evoke momentary patriotic sympathies among potential subscribers, rather than extolling the virtues of the library as a long-term educational resource.

Chapter four is an analysis of the library's buying policy and argues that an overrepresentation from key academic disciplines on the committees may have created a bias towards certain subjects. The final chapter compares this vision with how the library's services were utilised by three user groups: reading room users, tutorial class attendees and Ruhleben camp internees. Reading room usage generally concurred with the founders' overall vision for the library. In contrast, remote users attending tutorial classes were given the opportunity to curate their own reading which resulted in a more wide-ranging collection. The thesis concludes with an assessment of the library's development and role as a key element of Welsh nation-building at the beginning of the twentieth century.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to complete this thesis and writing it has been a genuine labour of love. The support and advice of my supervisors Prof Paul Lawrence and Prof Lorna Hughes has been invaluable and helped to make the process stimulating and enjoyable. Thanks also to Dr Ros Crone whose early advice took the project in a new and interesting direction. I am also grateful to Dr Michael Roberts at Aberystwyth University who encouraged me to apply for a PhD and advised on my early proposal.

The full access I have had to the National Library's archive has enriched my work and the staff's extensive knowledge helped me to navigate the collections. I would particularly like to thank Lorena Troughton, Jayne Day and Rhydian Davies for their help with my many and varied queries. I am indebted to the library volunteers Eoin Mahon, Aoife Mahon, Daniel Morgan, Rosemary Thomas and Nan Lloyd Williams who generously contributed many hours to this project, as well as their knowledge and expertise. I would also like to thank Andrew Green, Pedr ap Llwyd, Gwyneth Davies and Eilir Evans for their encouragement and support when I first started as a library volunteer and throughout my PhD. I have also been lucky to have the companionship of Owain Roberts, Rhian James, Andrew Cusworth, Lloyd Roderick and Paul McCann who make up the research department at the National Library. As a group they offered support, advice and tea in equal measure. I am particularly grateful to Paul McCann who offered guidance on all things digital.

My mum and dad have provided me with unwavering support throughout my life and this time has been no exception. Patrick Kavanagh, as well as graciously tolerating my daily library anecdotes, has offered me endless encouragement and care. More often than not when I look out into an auditorium your faces are looking back and that means more than I can say. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my dear friend Beryl Allen whose stimulating and entertaining conversation is much missed.

# Contents

<b>Tables, Figures and Additions .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter One: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>14</b>
I. Library History .....	14
II. National Libraries .....	20
III. The National Library of Wales .....	25
IV. National Libraries and National Identity .....	27
V. Theories of Nationalism .....	35
VI. National Identity in Wales .....	46
VII. Conclusion .....	53
VIII. Methods and Sources .....	55
<b>Chapter Two: The Campaign for the National Library of Wales c.1840-1905.....</b>	<b>68</b>
I. Early Appeals for a National Library of Wales c.1840-1873 .....	70
II. The National Library of Wales at the University College of Wales 1873-1890 ....	81
III. The 1890s .....	94
IV. Safeguarding a National Library for Wales 1900-1905.....	103
V. Conclusion.....	113
<b>Chapter Three: The National Library of Wales' Building Fund 1903-1916.....</b>	<b>115</b>
I. The Origins of the Fundraising Campaign .....	117

II. Support Outside of Wales.....	122
III. The Campaign in Wales .....	134
IV. The Latter Stages of the Appeal.....	146
V. Conclusion.....	151
<b>Chapter Four: Early Workings of the National Library of Wales 1907-1916 .....</b>	<b>154</b>
I. The Court, the Council and the Books Committee .....	155
II. Library Purchases: manuscripts and larger items 1909-1916.....	163
III. The Purchasing of Printed Books and the Copyright Act .....	181
IV. Conclusion .....	185
<b>Chapter Five: The Users of the National Library of Wales 1909-1916.....</b>	<b>189</b>
I. The Reading Room 1909-1912.....	191
II. Workers' Educational Association Book Box Scheme 1914-1916.....	212
III. National Library of Wales Book Box – Ruhleben Camp, Berlin 1915 .....	229
IV. Conclusion .....	235
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>238</b>
I. Re-evaluating the National Library of Wales .....	239
II. National Libraries and National Identities .....	247
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Appendix One: Biographies of Key Individuals.....</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>Appendix Two: The Volunteers.....</b>	<b>271</b>

## **Tables, Figures and Additions**

### **Tables**

<b>2.1</b> – First members of the Welsh library committee, 1896	<b>99</b>
<b>4.1</b> –Members of the first National Library of Wales council, 1907	<b>157</b>

### **Figures**

<b>3.1</b> – Geographical spread of subscribers to the National Library of Wales building fund, up to 1910	<b>126</b>
<b>3.2</b> – Total number of subscriptions and subscribers, by county	<b>136</b>
<b>3.3</b> – Average subscription, by county	<b>136</b>
<b>3.4</b> – Financial grouping of the Aberystwyth subscriptions	<b>137</b>
<b>4.1</b> – Categorisation of the manuscripts and larger items purchased by the National Library of Wales, 1909-1916	<b>165</b>
<b>5.1</b> – Readers' occupations, 1911	<b>196</b>
<b>5.2</b> – Categorisation of the printed books consulted in the reading room, 1909-1912	<b>207</b>
<b>5.3</b> – Categorisation of the manuscripts, maps and prints consulted in the reading room, 1909-1912	<b>208</b>
<b>5.4</b> – Geographical spread of the first classes to receive a National Library of Wales book box, 1914	<b>214</b>
<b>5.5</b> – Geographical spread of all the classes to receive a National Library of Wales book box, 1914-1916	<b>225</b>

## **Abbreviations**

HSC	Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion
INLA	Iraq National Library and Archive
MSS	Manuscripts
NLW	National Library of Wales
OU	Open University
UCW	University College Wales
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WBO	Welsh Biography Online
WEA	Workers' Educational Association



## **Introduction**

After over thirty-five years of sporadic campaigning from various interest groups in both Wales and London the National Library of Wales (NLW) was established by Royal Charter in 1907. As a result of a key discussion at the newly established 'National' Eisteddfod festival, the University College of Wales (UCW) in Aberystwyth offered to house a Welsh archive in 1873 – with the view to create a nucleus collection for a NLW and set up a campaign committee – but little was done to develop this concept. This lack of progress was mainly a result of Aberystwyth College's financial hardship coupled with an ambivalent attitude, by some involved, towards the Welsh language and its heritage.

However, a national renaissance in the 1880s saw a resurgence in the study of Welsh literature and culture which was adopted by, amongst others, a group of Welsh scholars at Oxford University. A number of these young men went on to have political careers as Liberal politicians and were heavily involved with Welsh cultural life, combining this burgeoning cultural nationalism with Welsh political nationalism. In the 1890s Welsh Liberal MPs began to lobby Parliament for Wales to be awarded an annual museum and library grant and in 1896 the Aberystwyth Welsh library campaign committee, based at Aberystwyth College, was resurrected.

From this point on the campaign to establish a NLW moved relatively swiftly and in 1903 the British government provisionally agreed to provide Wales with a national museum and library grant. However, the government would not commit to a specific financial amount and, instead, encouraged the various towns who wished to host, either or both institutions, to submit statements of interest which had to include a list of potential public subscriptions to part fund the project. The Aberystwyth library campaign committee launched a large scale subscription drive which raised around £20,000.

In 1905, on receipt of the statements from various Welsh towns, a Privy Council committee in Whitehall decided that Cardiff would host the National Museum and

Aberystwyth the National Library. In 1907 the NLW's court and council were established. John Williams was appointed president following his generous donations and John Ballinger, head of Cardiff Free Library, accepted Williams' request to become the first head librarian.

The library opened to the public in 1909 at the Assembly Rooms in Aberystwyth which acted as a temporary location until the new building opened in 1916. The library continued to receive donations and purchased books and manuscripts despite a limited budget. The NLW was named a copyright library in 1912 which helped to alleviate some of this financial burden. Alongside providing books and manuscripts to reading room users, from 1914 the NLW also sent book boxes to educational classes across Wales and, in 1915, sent books to Welsh men held at the Ruhleben internment camp in Berlin.

This thesis is a study of the development of the NLW (c.1840-1916) and divides its evolution into three distinct phases: establishment, management and utilisation. The current work situates the development of the NLW within a broader history of Wales during this period. This approach connects the library to the cultural and political situation from which it emerged, posing new questions about the library's relationship to Welsh national identity.

A small number of studies exist which explore the relationship between national identity and national library projects, but nothing of this type and depth has been done before, and not in relation to Wales. As part of a recent trend to broaden library history, this work combines a more conventional study of the internal administrative and operational workings of the library with a more innovative survey of the individuals who contributed to and those who utilised the library's services. These individuals who interacted with the library can be grouped into three categories: the founders, the subscribers and the users.

This thesis seeks to address the following research questions: why did the concept for a NLW develop during the mid-nineteenth century and what particular set of circumstances enabled the concept to become a reality in the early twentieth century? To what extent did those involved in establishing and managing the library seek to instil a particular version of Welsh national identity? How influential were users in shaping the library's collections? To what extent is the library an indicator of a shift in popular perceptions of national identity in Wales, and/or does the evidence suggest that it was manipulated by political and cultural elites seeking to build national identities?

The first chapter positions the current work within the theoretical frameworks of library and reading history, nationalism and Welsh national identity. This exploration reveals a gap in the literature which will be filled by this thesis. In response to an absence of studies on national libraries and national identities, methodological approaches from other disciplines such as museum studies are also discussed which illuminate a way forward. In addition, this section outlines the chosen methodological approach for this thesis and summarises the source material that it draws upon. The sources relating to the subscribers to the building fund and the early readers of the library were extensive, so volunteers from the NLW volunteering programme were recruited to input information into a database. This collaboration is discussed in detail in an appendix two, including the monitoring systems put in place to ensure accurate data entry.

The second chapter builds upon a small body of literature that charts the development of the NLW. This section offers a more critical analysis of the campaign to secure a national library within the context of a renewed assertion of Welsh national identity, both culturally and politically. The purpose of this section is to examine why the concept for a NLW developed during the mid-nineteenth century and to identify what influenced and hindered its progress. This chapter seeks to determine what motivated key individuals to become involved with the campaign and questions whether the concept of

a NLW was used as a divisive and, potentially, nationalistic tool by political and cultural elites.

Furthermore, this chapter draws on private correspondence between government officials relating to the possible locations for the national library and museum which were not referenced in other histories of the NLW. These documents shed light on how the decisions made by the British government impacted the local campaigns and the final outcome, undermining the significance previously attributed to the quality of Aberystwyth's statement submitted to the Privy Council committee.

Chapter three examines the subscription drive for the library building fund organised by the campaign committee. No detailed analysis of the early subscribers has hitherto been carried out, so this section establishes from where the majority of support came, whether it be from those residing in Wales or Welsh diaspora communities in Great Britain and beyond.

This chapter investigates how the stipulations outlined by the Privy Council committee framed the fundraising campaign and how it led to a garnering of mass local support rather than just securing the patronage of a few wealthy individuals. It reveals that people from all levels of society participated in the campaign but that this was not an unprovoked swell of support, as these groups were deliberately targeted using tailored fundraising tactics. It argues that the campaign, at its core, was a project orchestrated primarily by elites, fuelled by their personal interests rather than it being driven by a mass movement. Furthermore, in light of many subscriptions going unfulfilled, this section questions the use and effectiveness of nationalistic and patriotic fundraising techniques over an emphasis on the long term benefits of the library as an educational resource.

The remainder of the thesis examines the library during its first ten years as an operational institution. Chapter four illustrates that although the membership of the library's court suggests that it was engaged with a range of different constituencies many

of these appointments were purely symbolic and, in the main, court attendance was low. In reality, the majority of the decisions were made by a small group of elites and, until the development of a book box lending scheme, little was done to represent or cater for the members of the public who had contributed to the building fund.

Chapter four also offers a detailed analysis of the library's early buying policy and examines the role these committee members played in decision-making and how their personal interests influenced what was purchased, creating a bias towards certain subject areas (particularly history, religion and literature). The library's mission statement stipulated the collection of works composed in Welsh or any other Celtic language or which related to the Welsh or other Celtic people, so an analysis of the purchased items sheds light on the conception of Wales employed by the library at this time. This conception centred on Wales' role in a historical context, its literature (with a particular emphasis on poetry) and the history of non-conformity. In fact, the library's conception of Wales was very much in concurrence with that of Wales' eighteenth-century cultural revival, which focused primarily on the nation's rich history and writings.

The fifth chapter is a study of three distinct NLW user groups: readers who visited the library, attendees at educational classes who received book boxes and internees held at the Ruhleben camp who were sent books by the library. This section compares the vision and intentions of the library's founders and management, identified in chapter four, with new research on how the library services were used between 1909 and 1916. An evaluation of just the reading room users suggests that the library only attracted a small and narrow demographic, but a collective analysis of all the reader groups enables a broader picture of the library's interaction with users to emerge and demonstrates that, from 1914, the library began to cultivate relations with a range of constituencies across Wales and provide opportunities for social mobility.

The final section of the thesis summaries the key findings and presents three broad conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis of the evolution of the NLW. First, that the NLW was the brainchild of a select group of cultural and political elites, first in the 1860s and then again in the 1890s, rather than the product of a mass campaign movement across Wales. A number of these elites involved in the campaign in the 1890s had links to the Welsh political sphere and were connected to Welsh academia which was part of a renewed assertion of Welsh cultural identity. These factors enabled the NLW project to further develop during this decade. Second, once opened, the NLW's collecting policy became, primarily, an expression of this group of elites' personal interests and, to an extent, was used as a divisive tool to propagate a certain conception of Welsh national identity rooted in the cultural revival of the eighteenth century. Third, this curated national collection represented a particular version of Wales' national memory and, to a point, dictated what could be consulted by the small group of reading room users. However, the development of the NLW's book box scheme introduced a group of remote users to the library facilities and the international and future-focused nature of their book requests challenged the narrow vision of Welsh identity held by the library's founders. As a result of this scheme the NLW began to cater for a wider demographic.

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

This thesis straddles several distinct research areas including library and reading history, nationalism theory and Welsh history and national identity c.1840-1916. This chapter does not aim to provide a complete review of this literature but, instead, to contextualise the current work within the theoretical frameworks of these key research topics. Few studies have investigated the relationship between national libraries and national identity, therefore it is necessary to adopt methodological approaches from other academic fields to interrogate the historical data.

The first section of this review charts the development of the discipline of library history and examines more recent studies that aim to position libraries within their social and political contexts, particularly those few studies which focus on the theme of national identity. It also highlights the gap in the literature which the thesis goes some way to fill. The second interrogates theories of nationalism and national identity particularly in relation to Wales in order to position the current work within a theoretical framework.

### **I. Library History**

The discussion below highlights and evaluates the changes in approach to library history over the last fifty years, in particular the development of library history as an academic discipline since the 1960s, the evolution of the 'new' library history in the mid-1990s, and the critical evaluation of this 'new' methodology in the early part of the twentieth-first century. This section is followed by an appraisal of the literature on national libraries and their function. This evaluation is conducted with a view to devise a methodological approach to the current work which identifies the connections between the social, political and cultural conditions in Wales and the formation of the National Library of Wales (NLW).

For the most part, library history scholarship from the late nineteenth-century until the 1960s fell into one of two categories: broad, chronological histories of the public

library movement or studies of the minutiae of a particular institution or geographical area.<sup>1</sup> In both approaches little attention was given to thematic methodologies or social contextualisation. Both types of works have generally been authored by library professionals or enthusiasts, so the content is frequently sentimental and reverential, and the majority of these authors have prioritised fact-collecting over theoretical analysis and historical synthesis. These works provide a snapshot of particular libraries and systems in certain time periods, but their value, for a modern historian, is limited.<sup>2</sup> Library history, as an academic discipline, has flourished since the 1960s and in this decade two major library history journals were founded: *The Journal of Library History* and *Library History*.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the latter was to ‘provide a new focus for our newly defined discipline’, and to interrogate the data with a more analytical and theoretical approach, in contrast to articles featured in long-running journals such as *The Library*.<sup>4</sup>

J.G. Ollè, a librarian and founding member of the Library History Group, argued in 1979 that ‘[t]he greatest problem, and the greatest challenge, in library history arise from its greatest defect: it is closed circuit history. If it is not by librarians for librarians, it is by historians for librarians.’<sup>5</sup> Library history, at this time, was primarily written for librarians as it was a key component of their professional training. In fact, just over a

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<sup>1</sup> Key exemplars of the former include Thomas Greenwood, *Public Libraries* (London: Cassell & Co., 1894); J.J. Ogle, *The Free Library: its history and present condition* (London: George Allen, 1897); Ernest Savage, *The Story of Libraries and Book Collecting* (London: Routledge, 1909); John Minto, *A History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. and The Library Association, 1932) while the latter (micro histories) were usually published as articles in either *The Library* or *The Library Association Record*. Otherwise they were published in book form by the library in question or a local history society.

<sup>2</sup> Exemplars of these detailed micro-studies include Hubert David Hughes, *A History of Durham Cathedral Library* (Durham: Durham County Advertiser, 1925); Edmund Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library 1845-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952); Henry Guppy, *John Rylands Library Manchester 1899-1924* (Manchester: The University Press, 1924)

<sup>3</sup> The former was established in 1966 and was edited and published at the Florida State University and is now titled *Information and Culture: A Journal of History*. The latter was established in 1967 and endorsed by the Library History Group (an offshoot of the British Library Association) and is now titled *Library and Information History*.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Hoare *et al*, ‘Forty Years of Library History: The Editor’s Testimony’, *Library History*, Vol.23, No.1 (2007), pp.3-15, p.3.

<sup>5</sup> J.G. Ollè, *Library History* (London: Bingley, 1979), p.26.



decade earlier Ollè himself had written *Library History: an examination guidebook* in which he stressed that ‘library history should not be studied on its own, but always in relation to the relevant social, educational and publishing history.’<sup>6</sup> Ollè blamed the lack of attention paid to libraries by social historians on the scarcity of comprehensive library histories from which historians could glean information and references to source material.<sup>7</sup> In fact, library history manuscripts were rarely published by mainstream publishers and the majority were printed by the Library Association including the two major library history works of the 1970s: Thomas Kelly’s *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain* and W.A. Munford’s *History of the Library Association 1877-1977*.<sup>8</sup>

Munford was a librarian, but Kelly was a professor of adult education at the University of Liverpool and his book had been commissioned by the Library Association. Consequently, Kelly positioned the public library within the context of educational history and was explicit in his aim to reach an audience outside of the library profession: ‘I have tried throughout to tell the story in a way that will be of interest not only to the professional librarian but also to the social historian and the general reader’.<sup>9</sup> In 1996 Alistair Black defined Kelly’s work as ‘exhaustive though mostly descriptive’, however, at the time of publication it was well received and a later edition retitled *Books for the People* was published in a large format and included photographs.<sup>10</sup> At this time, Kelly’s work is a rare example of library history that actively appealed to an audience outside of the library profession.

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<sup>6</sup> J.G. Ollè, *Library History. An Examination Handbook*, 1967 (London: Bingley, second edition 1971), p.11.

<sup>7</sup> Ollè, *Library History. An Examination Handbook*, p.26.

<sup>8</sup> The Library Association was established in 1877 and is now called the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. They began to produce their own publications from 1894, which included the journal *The Library Association Record*. For more information on the association see W.A. Munford, *A History of The Library Association 1877-1977* (London: Library Association, 1976)

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Kelly, *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain 1845-1965*, 1975 (London: Library Association, second edition 1977), p.v.

<sup>10</sup> Alistair Black, *A New History of the English Public Library: Social and Intellectual Contexts 1850-1914* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p.4.

However, Kelly's alternative methodology did not affect any significant changes in the way library history was approached, and publications continued to be, in the main, fact-heavy histories of particular institutions.<sup>11</sup> Black argues that 'the nursery of so much research' was library history courses, where an emphasis was placed on fact-collecting and there was 'a tendency to describe and chronicle, rather than theorise and interpret'.<sup>12</sup> It was the radical changes made to the educational programmes in the 1980s that caused library history to reach a crisis point. The onset of new vocationalism, which prioritised marketable skill sets over professional expertise, meant that library history, which had been a key element of the library studies curriculum, was suddenly devalued.<sup>13</sup>

In 1995 a reinvention of the subject was championed by Black who argued that in order to survive 'library history need[ed] to mount a guerrilla campaign' and thus proposed a new manifesto.<sup>14</sup> Black's aims were to dispel the myth that libraries are innately apolitical, to be deductive rather than empirical, to develop more robust theoretical methods, and to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to stimulate the development of new methodologies.<sup>15</sup> Black argued that library history's purpose was 'to tell...us about historic societies and not historic libraries.'<sup>16</sup>

Other historians agreed with Black on the necessity of a new approach.<sup>17</sup> However, some argued that the various pathways that could be pursued were more

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<sup>11</sup> Exemplars of these histories include J.C.T. Oates, *Cambridge University Library. A Historical Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1975); G.H. Ballantyne, *The Signet Library Edinburgh and its Librarians 1722-1972* (Glasgow: Scottish Library Association, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> Alistair Black, 'New Methodologies in Library History: a Manifesto for the 'New' Library History', *Library History*, Vol.11, No.1 (1995), pp.76-85, p.77, p.80.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on the effects of vocationalism see Alistair Black, 'New Methodologies in Library History: a Manifesto for the 'New' Library History', pp.76-78; Dave Muddiman, 'Innovation or instrumental drift? : The "new vocationalism" and information and library education in the U.K.', *Education for Information*, Vol.12, No.2 (1994), pp.259-270.

<sup>14</sup> Black, 'New Methodologies', p.79.

<sup>15</sup> Black, 'New Methodologies', p.81.

<sup>16</sup> Black, 'New Methodologies', pp.79-81.

<sup>17</sup> See for example G.K.Peatling, 'Discipline and the Discipline: Histories of the British Public Library' *Libraries & Culture*, Vol.38, No.2 (2003), pp.121-146; Edward A. Goedeken, 'Our Historiographical Enterprise: Shifting Emphases and Directions', *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, Vol.45, No.3 (2010), pp.350-358.

numerous and complex than Black originally identified. In Davies and Aho's article *Whither Library History?* – a response to two of Black's articles 'New Methodologies' and 'Information and modernity: the History of Information and the Eclipse of Library History' – they proposed nine types of library history and four potential models going forward. Black proposed cutting library history loose from the institutional anchor which, in his opinion, created an inherent bias, and instead, recommended the discipline turn to the model of information history. Davies and Aho disagreed, and argued that this approach would narrow the field even more, and suggested that library history should become a sub-discipline of history, so it can be written 'within a cultural conception...And in doing so, library historians should seek stronger professional relationships with historians and historians of the book'.<sup>18</sup> In a further response, Black concedes that by aligning library history only with information history it could eclipse it altogether and that perhaps the chameleon-like behaviour of library history is in fact its strength:

it would entail a healthy cross-fertilization of library history with a variety of other disciplines, thereby allowing it to thrive and survive as a multi-faced, multi-faceted subject with a portfolio rather than a potentially permanent, paralysed identity.<sup>19</sup>

Black's initial call to arms, although spirited and necessary, lacked the complexity of Davis and Aho's subsequent proposal. Black initially suggested that library history would require the rigid boundaries of information history in order to survive, whereas in his response to Davis and Aho his focus has shifted. In a response to this debate, Jonathan Rose expressed scepticism about 'join[ing] someone else's gang, hoping that, if we adopt

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<sup>18</sup> Donald G. Davis Jnr. and Jon Arvid Aho, 'Whither Library History? A Critical Essay on Black's Model for the Future of Library History, with some additional options', *Library History*, Vol.17, No.1 (2001), pp.21-37, p.36.

<sup>19</sup> Alistair Black, 'A Response to Whither Library History?' *Library History*, Vol.17, No.1 (2001), pp.37-39, p.39.

their jargon and their paradigms, they will let us tag along.’ Instead he proposed that library historians become involved with the early stages of book studies ‘to make library history an integral part of the story of the book.’<sup>20</sup> Although inconclusive, these debates have laid the groundwork for a more varied and broad approach to library history, such as the current thesis, which, as Black suggested, goes ‘beyond mere shallow references to context’ but, instead, ‘dig[s] deeply into the rich treasures, in search of theories and insights which can illuminate the otherwise stale record of past library activity.’<sup>21</sup>

An outcome of the discipline’s rigorous self-assessment was the ambitious, multi-volume work *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* published in 2006: the first comprehensive and scholarly history of libraries charting their progress from early Celtic Britain up until the digital age. The editors’ introduction outlines a purposeful aim ‘it has to be said that the better library history is often that which is infused and illuminated in some way by knowledge and contexts extracted from outside the primary and secondary sources of the subject.’<sup>22</sup> The essays in this volume epitomise the cross-fertilization with other disciplines prophesied by Black, particularly with history and information science. On the whole, this multi-faceted approach is successful and contextualises ‘the library’, historically and socially. In contrast to pre-2000 library history, there are few examples of the conventional essay, limited to the discussion of an individual library’s history without contextualisation; instead, the approaches are thematic and comparative. Pertinently, the exceptions to this rule are the essays that chart the history of the four national libraries. It is unclear why the national library histories were still written in this traditional format, when other chapters in the collection are based

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Rose, ‘Alternative Futures for Library History’, *Libraries & Culture*, Vol.38, No.1 (2003), pp. 50-60, p.56, p.58.

<sup>21</sup> Black, ‘New Methodologies’, p.80.

<sup>22</sup> Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, ‘Introduction: sources and methodologies for the history of libraries in the modern era’ in A. Black and P. Hoare (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, Volume III, 1850-2000 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.1-6, p.5. See also Peter A. Hoare, ‘Writing our History: the Project for A History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland’, *Library & Information History*, Vol.11, No.1 (1995), pp.86-91.

on historical synthesis, for example: ‘Public Libraries in Wales since 1862’ and ‘Public Library People 1850-1919’.

Before 2005 there are isolated examples of research which was beginning to interrogate the role of particular national libraries in society. One example is an edited collection focused on the history of the National Library of Scotland entitled *For the Encouragement of Learning* which explored its origins and legacy.<sup>23</sup> However, in the main, scholarly research into the history of national libraries is limited, and the majority of popular publications on the topic document only the basic factual history of a building and its collections.

## **II. National Libraries**

This section presents an overview of the literature on the history of national libraries, particularly focusing on the definition of a national library which has been much debated by library professionals. In addition, this section also provides information on the development of the national library model which can be divided into two distinct types. The first type is a national library which develops in tandem with a national state and the second type is when a national library is established which represents a threat to the overarching national context. Examples of both types of national library are examined in order to contextualise the development of the NLW, which happened relatively late in comparison with other national libraries. A small number of case studies demonstrate how an institution could be an indicator of either an alignment or a disconnection between political unification and cultural identity.

Arundell Esdaile’s seminal work *National Libraries of the World*, published in 1934, was the first and is still one of only a few publications to discuss national libraries as a distinct group, but it does not go beyond basic descriptive accounts of each library’s

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<sup>23</sup> Patrick Cadell and Ann Matheson (eds.), *For the Encouragement of Learning Scotland’s National Library 1689-1989* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1989)

history and function. Esdaile highlighted that there was 'voluminous literature' available on the history of libraries, but 'apparently no general account of that comparatively modern product, the national library'.<sup>24</sup> Esdaile did not review every national library; instead, he included just '[t]hose which are most famous and historically interesting or significant for their administration'.<sup>25</sup> The study focused mainly on the European libraries, but also included the Library of Congress and the national libraries of Mexico, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, China and Japan.

It was not until 1955 that the subject of national libraries was addressed again in detail, this time by the newly-established *Library Trends* journal which published an issue which evaluated the current trends in national libraries. A senior librarian at the Library of Congress, David C. Mearns, edited the issue and professed in his summarising chapter that national libraries 'are wondrously complicated organisms...most are conspicuously differentiated one from another...they defy or elude simple categorization'.<sup>26</sup> Mearns, along with the other contributors, were unable to agree on one overarching definition of a national library, however, they were in agreement that most national libraries were part of a national government structure and funded by public money.

In 1958 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organised a symposium held in Vienna in order to discuss this issue further. Although the aim of the symposium, similar to the issue of *Library Trends*, was to formulate a concrete definition, this continued to prove elusive and only the broadest statement could be agreed upon, summarised by F.C. Francis, director and principal librarian at the British Museum, in the published conference proceedings: '[s]peaking broadly the national library in any country is the library which has the duty of collecting

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<sup>24</sup> Arundell Esdaile, *National Libraries of the World: Their History, administration and public services*, 1934 (London: Library Association, second edition completely revised by F.J. Hill 1957), p.v.

<sup>25</sup> Esdaile, *National Libraries of the World*, p.vii.

<sup>26</sup> D.C. Mearns *et al.*, 'Current Trends in National Libraries' *Library Trends*, Vol.4, No.1 (1955), pp.3-116, p.96.

and preserving for posterity the written production of that country': a statement which was very similar to the suggested purpose of a national library put forward by Mearns three years earlier.<sup>27</sup> By the sixteenth UNESCO conference, held in 1970, a more robust definition had been formulated. It was declared that national libraries were

[l]ibraries which, irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a 'deposit' library, whether by law or under other arrangements. They will also normally perform some of the following functions: produce a national bibliography; hold and keep up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature, including books about the country; act as a national bibliographical information centre; compile union catalogues; publish the retrospective national bibliography. Libraries which may be called 'national' but whose functions do not correspond to the above definition should not be placed in the 'National Libraries' category.<sup>28</sup>

This definition implies that there can only be one 'national' library in any given national context. However, in the case of Britain during the early twentieth century three 'national' libraries (not including the British Museum) existed within the infrastructure provided by one politically unifying nation, each representing a distinct cultural subset. Therefore national political unification does not always align with cultural identity, evidenced by the existence of the national libraries in Scotland, Wales and Ireland even though the British Museum was designated as the 'official' national library. John Osmond described the national museum and library of Wales as 'anti-British institutions' even though they were both funded, in part, by the British state.<sup>29</sup> Godfrey Burston describes these types of libraries as cultural national libraries 'which offers services over a major administrative region, formerly independent, and with some political or cultural

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<sup>27</sup> UNESCO, *National Libraries: Their Problems and Prospects. Symposium on National Libraries in Europe Vienna 8-27 September 1958* (Paris: UNESCO, 1960), p.21.

<sup>28</sup> Frank L. Schick, 'The International Standardization of Library Statistics', *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries*, Vol. XXV, No.1 (1971), pp.2-11, pp.8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Prys Morgan, 'The Creation of the National Museum and National Library' in John Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), pp.13-21, p.20.

cohesion.<sup>30</sup> These institutions are in contrast to the first wave of national libraries which grew up in tandem with the nation-state which supported their development. Instead, these case studies represent a threat to an overarching national context, subverting the notion of a single national library for every country, which creates a unifying view of a nation.

Post-1970 scholars began to study the historical development of the national library model and as a result two types began to emerge: libraries which were usually based on a core royal collection and founded during the eighteenth century and those established from the nineteenth century onwards which were usually, in part, funded by benefactors. The libraries founded from the nineteenth century onwards were usually inspired by the earlier models.<sup>31</sup>

The recognisable model of a state controlled national library began to develop in the late eighteenth century. The Bibliothèque du Roi in France, renamed Bibliothèque Nationale in 1792 following the creation of the French First Republic, can be identified as one of the earliest examples of this type of national library. The library was based on an extensive royal collection thought to date back to the reign of Louis XII (1499-1515). Bette W. Oliver argues that after the French Revolution ‘the national library was intended to serve as a visible symbol of republican pride, open and accessible to all citizens’, physically embodying the new regime.<sup>32</sup>

Another early model was the British Museum Library which was the national library in all but name up until its collections were moved to a purpose built national library in 1998 at St Pancras. The British Museum printed books department was founded

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<sup>30</sup> Godfrey Burston, ‘National Libraries: An Analysis’ reprinted from *International Library Review*, Vol.5, No.2 (1973), pp.183-194 in Maurice B. Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, Vol.1 (London: Aslib, 1979), pp.87-98, p.89.

<sup>31</sup> Dorothy Anderson, ‘The National Library and its bibliographic functions: an organizational problem’, *Library Trends*, Vol. 25, No.3 (1977), pp.645-663, p.645; Eric Wainwright, ‘The National Library in an Electronic Age: Dinosaur or Catalyst?’, *Alexandria*, Vol.5, No.2 (1993), pp.111-118, p.111.

<sup>32</sup> Bette W. Oliver, ‘The Bibliothèque Nationale from 1792 to 1794: becoming a national institution during the French Revolution’, *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, Vol.42, No.1 (2007), pp.48-56, p.49.



in 1753, which united several important collections including the Royal Collection, the Hans Sloane Collection and the Cotton Library. During the tenure of the librarian Anthony Panizzi, in the mid-nineteenth century, the British Museum Library changed dramatically, with the development of a pioneering cataloguing system, an increase in collections, and the building of the iconic round reading room in 1857. Ian R. Willison argued that ‘Panizzi gave the national library its classic form...A national library, however modified, became henceforth an integral part of the program whereby other countries sought to establish their cultural independence’.<sup>33</sup>

However, it was not just the early national libraries of Europe that became prototypes for future national libraries; several were modelled on the American Library of Congress founded in 1800. The Library of Congress was established as the new nation’s legislative library, but quickly began to function as a *de facto* national library, purchasing the Thomas Jefferson library in 1816. Ainsworth Rand Spofford’s appointment as head librarian saw the library focus more on its role as a national repository, based on the Panizzi model.

Unlike the early European national libraries, the Library of Congress was not based on a royal collection, so faced the task of building a national collection from scratch. Although a daunting prospect, this approach came with a certain amount of freedom as ‘they were not affected by the weight of the past...which had often had a deleterious effect on the development of the older libraries.’<sup>34</sup> Similar to the NLW, this type of national library, had, to some extent, the opportunity to be selective, prioritise certain areas for development and foster their own nation’s narrative.

Without a pre-existing corpus to act as a new national library’s nucleus collection library campaign groups often relied on wealthy philanthropists to donate either their own

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<sup>33</sup> Ian R. Willison, ‘The National Library in Historical Perspective’, *Libraries & Culture*, Vol.24, No.1 (1989), pp. 75-95, p.82.

<sup>34</sup> K.W. Humphreys, *A National Library in Theory and Practice* (London: British Library, 1987), p.20.

private libraries or give a large financial donation in order to begin purchasing relevant items. John Williams played a pivotal role in the establishment of the NLW by donating his entire collection which amounted to almost 25,000 books and 1,200 manuscripts, including nineteen of the twenty-two known Welsh titles published before 1600. The Széchényi Library in Hungary has functioned as the national library since 1802 and is named after its founder Count Ferenc Széchényi. Széchényi was an aristocrat and donated his private library of approximately 12,000 volumes. These examples reveal that a single individual who is prepared to donate their own private collection can wield immense power over the construction of a national library, can influence where the building is situated and, most importantly, decide what is contained within the initial national collection.

### **III. The National Library of Wales**

There have been two works specifically about the history of the NLW, both written by former head librarians. The first, entitled *The National Library of Wales: a survey of its history, its contents and activities* was written in 1937 by William Llewelyn Davies, the then head librarian. John Ballinger had planned to write a book which surveyed the library's progress up to 1930 but he had died before its completion, so Davies had taken up the mantle. Davies' volume is a general history of the library which highlights key events, significant collections and influential individuals, but contains little analysis. The second, a more scholarly publication, is by David Jenkins titled *A Refuge in Peace and War: The National Library of Wales to 1952* and was published in 2002.<sup>35</sup> Both are chronological histories of the library; the latter explores the circumstances that led to an initial call for the library (and museum) to be established.

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<sup>35</sup> William Ll. Davies, *The National Library of Wales: A Survey of Its History, Its Contents, and Its Activities* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1937); David Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War: The National Library of Wales to 1952* (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 2002). There is also a publication specifically about the building D.Huws, *The National Library of Wales: A History of the Building* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1994)

In addition, a collection of essays edited by John Osmond entitled *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* was published in 2007 following a series of mini conferences which focused on their role as ‘conscious nation-building’ institutions.<sup>36</sup> Although the primary focus of this collection of essays was to survey the present role of the museum and library, it also includes an exploration of the circumstances of their founding in 1907.

Jenkins focuses on the key influential figures of the early campaign, the main donors and funders, and the staff who developed the library once it had been established. It is a useful source, as it places the library in the wider context of Wales’ political, educational and economic systems. As a former head librarian, Jenkins’ approach to the material is relatively even-handed, however, perhaps because of his background his research is primarily rooted in the administrative records of the library, such as annual reports and meeting minutes. There is little work done to gauge the impact of the library on the people of Wales, or to monitor how readers were utilising library facilities.

The article ‘The National Library of Wales Book Box Scheme, and the South Wales Coalfield 1914-1939’ by Chris Baggs focuses on the effect of the NLW’s ‘travelling library’ which provided books for adult education classes. This scheme enabled working people, with little access to library facilities, the opportunity to read educational texts. The main focus of the article is the scheme’s most successful period – post-1918 – but Baggs does touch briefly on its development before the war. Baggs emphasises ‘how important the service was to the National Library in defining its role in Welsh cultural life’ and that the scheme helped to dispel the notion that the library was only for academic research. Baggs concludes that through this scheme ‘the NLW kept faith with those who had provided their pennies [to the building fund], and undoubtedly

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<sup>36</sup> John Osmond, ‘Preface’ in J. Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), p.2.

contributed greatly in providing miners with ‘the best literature’.<sup>37</sup> The current work investigates further the possible motives behind the NLW developing this scheme and evaluates the impact of the first wave of book boxes sent out in 1914.

To summarise, there are almost no references to the role of Wales’ library service in the development of Welsh national identity. Therefore, to remedy the conspicuous gap in the available literature, this work will determine to what extent the library service may have helped to inculcate a sense of national identity, but also whether it was perhaps an expression of it.

#### **IV. National Libraries and National Identity**

As highlighted, the history of national libraries is, for the most part, unsophisticated in comparison to other library history, which by the early twentieth-first century had changed dramatically, with many works being published that challenged certain preconceptions of libraries and their role in society. Library historians had begun to tackle certain under researched areas such as gender and class, but even in extensive collections such as *The Cambridge History of Libraries* the theme of national identity continued to be neglected. This section is a critical assessment of a collection of recent studies that have interrogated the relationship between libraries and national identity, and how they reveal the need for further work in this area.

In 2004, the library historian G.K. Peatling refuted the claim ‘that library history can have nothing useful to say in relation to national identity’ as ‘it would seem any sub-discipline seriously intent on gaining greater academic consideration would be ill advised to ignore it.’<sup>38</sup> He highlighted that

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<sup>37</sup> Christopher M. Baggs, ‘The National Library of Wales Book Box Scheme and the South Wales Coalfield’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.30, No.2 (1997), pp.207-229. Further reading on this subject includes Hywel Francis, ‘The Origins of the South Wales Miners’ Library’, *History Workshop*, Vol.2 (1976), pp.183-205.

<sup>38</sup> G.K. Peatling, ‘Public Libraries and National Identity in Britain 1850-1919’, *Library History*, Vol.20, No.1 (2004), pp.33-47, pp.33-34.

even the 'new' library history has been surprisingly deficient in its failure to assimilate one theme of increasing currency among the wider historical community, that of national identity...[and that] library history definitely should be one of 'the places' where national identity is considered, interrogated and defined.<sup>39</sup>

When Peatling uses the term 'new' library history he is referring to scholars such as Black who since the early 1990s had attempted to change the way library history was studied. Black's seminal text *A New History of the English Public Library* was published in 1996, and it is this particular text that Peatling critiques in his article on national identity. He is critical of Black's decision to limit his studies to only the English public library system '[b]ecause Black assumes rather than proves the integrity and utility of 'England' as a unit of analysis...without ever having tested it.'<sup>40</sup> Black does make the connection between the library's accepted history as an institution of 'social neutrality and impartiality' and the traditional characteristics 'associated with a clichéd British way of life'. He also concludes that '[i]t behoves cultural investigation in search of reality to challenge, wherever possible, accepted cultural 'truths' and myths.'<sup>41</sup> However, Black aims to only challenge these myths within the confines of the library system rather than addressing the wider issues concerning British or English national identity which are the foundations upon which his whole project rests. Therefore, Peatling is correct when he asserts that 'Black fails to consider the extent to which his own linking of public library development to an 'essentially' English culture disables any attempt to interrogate such myths of English national identity as devices of political manipulation.'<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the prevalence of the theme of national identity in other areas of historical studies, highlighted by Peatling, it is also well researched within the realm of

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<sup>39</sup> Peatling, 'Public Libraries and National Identity in Britain', pp.33-35.

<sup>40</sup> Peatling, 'Public Libraries and National Identity', p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> Alistair Black, *A New History of the English Public Library: Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p.1.

<sup>42</sup> Peatling, 'Public Libraries and National Identity', p. 34.

museum studies.<sup>43</sup> Although not identical, both museums and libraries are cultural, archival institutions, so there are many parallels to be drawn between the two. It prompts the question, if the theme is so well researched within the field of museum studies why has it been neglected within the discipline of library history? There are several possible reasons: historically some museums' acquisition policies have been viewed as controversial due to the housing of plundered artefacts often evoking public debates on representations of national identity; the practice of curating exhibitions is an explicit public demonstration of a museum's deliberate selection processes; and perhaps the book is not viewed as an artefact in and of itself, so its links to a sense of national identity are different from the curated museum object. As a result, the library and its relevance to national identity may have been overlooked, because, unlike the museum model, its selection processes and decision-making are almost always hidden from view. Although little research has been done to redress this balance, in *Myths, Memories and Futures* there are two relevant essays that begin to address some of these issues: Prys Morgan's 'The Creation of the National Museum and National Library' and Rhiannon Mason's 'Representing the Nation'.

Morgan, a historian, who has been president of the Eisteddfod and the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, is aware that 'to deliver an objective scholarly lecture about two institutions he has loved since childhood' is a difficult if not impossible task; therefore, as a reader, this partiality ought to be considered.<sup>44</sup> Morgan argues that the

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<sup>43</sup> See Annie C. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities' in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: an Anthology of Contexts* (Malden; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Flora E.S. Kaplan, (ed.), *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': the Role of Objects in National Identity* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994); Fiona McLean, 'Museums and the Construction of National Identity: A Review', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.3, No.4 (2007), pp.244-252.

<sup>44</sup> An Eisteddfod is a Welsh festival of literature, music and performance, for more information see David Howell, 'The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Wales: A Need for Safeguarding?', *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, Vol.8 (2013), pp.104-116, pp.107-109. The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion is a London based Welsh learned society and its interests have been predominantly cultural, for more information see Emrys Jones and Dewi Watkin Powell, *The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion: a concise history 1751-2001* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 2004)

founding of the museum and library was a result of the ‘first age of devolution’ in Wales from 1880-1914 which was a reaction, initially, to the Blue Books crisis of 1847.<sup>45</sup> Morgan argues that the creation of these cultural institutions is an indication of a nation aspiring to self-governance and endeavouring to construct its own identity within the confines of the British Commonwealth. However, it is conceivable that Morgan amplifies and simplifies the museum and library’s ability ‘to shape a rib cage for nationality’ as it is questionable how influential these institutions were and if this sense of ‘nationality’ was felt across the entirety of Wales.<sup>46</sup>

Mason’s essay focuses on the National Museum in Cardiff and the role it has played in defining and representing Wales as a nation. Even though Mason prioritises the national museums rather than the library, she emphasises that ‘the former have many resonances for the latter.’<sup>47</sup> Mason argues that the idea of Wales as just a constitutive element of Britain was challenged by the establishment of these institutions, and that they facilitated a reimagining of Wales as a separate nation. In addition, she highlights that the existence of these specific national and cultural institutions posed the following questions: how should Wales officially be represented? How would the artefacts they already possessed fit into a conception of Welsh identity? What would subsequently need to be collected?<sup>48</sup>

Mason expanded this line of enquiry in her book *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums*. She examines the role and function of the museum

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<sup>45</sup> For more information on the impact of the Blue Books on education see ‘H.G.Williams ‘Nation State versus Nation Identity: State and Inspectorate in Mid-Victorian Wales’, *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol.40, No.2 (2000), pp.145-168; Prys Morgan, ‘The Creation of the National Museum and National Library’ in J. Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), pp.13-21.

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, ‘The Creation of the National Museum and National Library’, p.21.

<sup>47</sup> Rhiannon Mason, ‘Representing the Nation’ in J.Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), pp.23-37, p.24. See also Alexandra Ward, ‘Archaeology, Heritage and Identity: the creation and development of a National Museum in Wales, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Cardiff University, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> Mason, ‘Representing the Nation’, p.27.

within the framework of cultural politics to question whether museums can be ‘active agents in the reimagining of national identities’, but is clear that a museum’s collections (like a library’s) ‘are shaped as much by chance and fortuity as by strategy and design.’<sup>49</sup>

Mason questions:

How are national cultures defined within national museums and why?  
What is the role of national museums in selecting, constructing and authorizing particular versions and representations of national cultures?  
What is left out and why? How and why do these definitions change over time and what are the implications and politics of retelling or constructing new national stories?<sup>50</sup>

She also suggests where ‘the nation’ may be located within a cultural institution: government policy, organisational structures, collecting policies, the collections themselves, specific displays/catalogues, architecture, marketing materials, and interpretations via press, professionals and visitors.<sup>51</sup> The study of national and cultural institutions in Wales and how they relate to national identity is widely under researched, so Mason’s methodological approach to the subject provides a useful framework for appraising the NLW. In terms of the current work, an analysis of the library’s selection processes will further help to interrogate the library’s role as an ‘active agent’ in (re)inventing national identities.

Brown and Davis-Brown argue that libraries, like museums, ‘help to preserve a collective memory and thence to constitute a collective national identity’, and go as far as to suggest ‘that archives are the manufacturers of memory and not merely the guardians of it.’<sup>52</sup> Featherstone emphasises the importance of the development of the archive in the

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<sup>49</sup> Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and Its National Museums* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2007), p.2, p.29.

<sup>50</sup> Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*, p.2

<sup>51</sup> For further work on archives and national memory see R.H. Brown and B. Davis-Brown, ‘The making of memory: the politics of archives, libraries and museums in the construction of national consciousness’, *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol.11, No.4 (1998), pp.17-32; Mike Featherstone, ‘Archiving Culture’ *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.51, No.1 (2000), pp.161-184.

<sup>52</sup> Brown and Davis-Brown, ‘The Making of Memory’ pp.19-22.



nineteenth century: 'the archive became seen as the repository of the national history and national memory...accumulated in the archive awaiting the historian's gaze to bring it to life.'<sup>53</sup> In a sense the existence of the archive legitimises a certain vision of a nation's memory which, consciously or not, privileges certain aspects of history, potentially driven by a nationalistic agenda.

Following Peatling's call in 2004 for further research on the topic of libraries and national identity the response worldwide has been limited, and almost non-existent in Britain. Two Australian scholars have published research on the links between national identity and the Australian library system: Heather Gaunt uses the Tasmanian public library as a central case study and Belinda Tiffen investigates the role nationalism has played in the history of the National Library of Australia.<sup>54</sup> Like Mason, Tiffen argues that the establishment of a national library can 'signif[y]...the legitimacy of the nation as a political and cultural entity with its own heritage and culture worthy of being recorded and preserved.'<sup>55</sup> As part of her study of the history of the National Library of Australia she collated and analysed the early acquisitions and concluded that 'collecting decisions are politicised and cannot be purely subjective. The national collection cannot merely be a disinterested record of national documentary heritage, but must participate in the social, political and cultural discourses of the time.'<sup>56</sup> This theory is integral to the approach of the current work which seeks to determine how influential the political and cultural landscape of Wales was on the construction of the library collection.

Tiffen highlights that prior to Peatling's appraisal of library history several historians had studied libraries in Russia and Yugoslavia to examine the possible

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<sup>53</sup> Mike Featherstone, 'Archive', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol.23, No.2-3 (2006), pp.591-596, p.593.

<sup>54</sup> Heather Gaunt, 'A Native Instinct of Patriotism': Nationalism in the Australian Public Library, from Federation to the 1930s. A Case Study of the Public Library of Tasmania', *Library History*, Vol.24, No. 2 (2008), pp.152-166; Belinda Tiffen, 'Recording the Nation: Nationalism and the History of the National Library of Australia', *The Australian Library Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 3/4 (2007), pp.342-359.

<sup>55</sup> Tiffen, 'Recording the nation', p.334.

<sup>56</sup> Tiffen, 'Recording the nation', p.357.

connections between libraries and national identity, and had concluded that both institutions were overtly political.<sup>57</sup> Tiffen states that it is certainly the case that more research needs to be done worldwide, but that Peatling's assessment is really only applicable to library history in Britain and America. Tiffen offers an explanation for this gap in the literature of American and British library history by highlighting that '[i]n democratic, secular societies...it is more difficult to see the influence of nationalistic philosophies on cultural institutions, as the influence is often more subtle, diffuse and perhaps even unconscious.'<sup>58</sup>

An article written in 2008 by Julie Biando Edwards and Stephen P. Edwards examines the Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA) through the lens of Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined community'. Edwards and Edwards' article is an assessment of the current difficulties faced by the staff at the INLA following the Second Iraq War, and they explain the central role the library aspires to play in the creation of a sense of national identity in a state with major religious and cultural divisions. The authors examine the history of the library by employing Anderson's concept of 'print capitalism' – the dissemination of mass literature which enables individuals to connect with an imagined community – to illustrate the importance of a national library as a guardian of history and a community space in which to rebuild a nation. This article aims to answer '[h]ow is it, exactly, that libraries are able to wield such important symbolic and societal power?'<sup>59</sup>

Following the creation of the state of Iraq in 1920, the INLA was built alongside a nationwide school system, to improve levels of literacy. Edwards and Edwards argue

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<sup>57</sup> Mary Stuart, 'Creating Culture: The Rossica Collection of the Imperial Public Library and the Construction of National Identity', *Libraries & Culture*, Vol.30, No.1 (1995), pp.1-25; Andras Riedlmayer, 'Erasing the Past: the Destruction of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol.29, No.1 (1995), pp.7-11.

<sup>58</sup> Tiffen, 'Recording the nation', p.343.

<sup>59</sup> Julie Biando Edwards and Stephan P. Edwards, 'Culture and the New Iraq: The Iraq National Library and Archive, "Imagined Community" and the Future of the Iraqi Nation', *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, Vol.43, No.3 (2008), pp.327-342, p.333.

that ‘in concert with the theory of the “imagined community,” as literary and education rates rose significantly, so too did national consciousness.’<sup>60</sup> The authors’ link between the rise of literary rates and national consciousness is tenuous, as it appears to be based on a relatively small increase of secondary school pupils from two hundred to two thousand during a ten year period, a doubling of primary pupils (no specific numbers are cited), and a statement by the education minister that Iraqi national identity would be promoted.<sup>61</sup> They do not define the term ‘national consciousness’ or reveal how its increase was evaluated, and fail to ascertain whether this sense of nationalism was experienced by the whole of the Iraqi population or only championed by a political or cultural elite.

Edwards and Edwards are content to assume that libraries automatically wield societal power rather than attempting to prove this hypothesis, so the question of whether they do or not is left unanswered. Regrettably the impact of the library on the community is only gleaned from the library staff, in particular the director, and not from the Iraqi public. It would have been useful for the authors to look beyond the context of the institution to discover whether the library directly contributes to a renewed sense of national identity within the public at large. Of course, in a volatile country such as Iraq this line of enquiry may have been problematic, but the discipline of library history has, in the past, been accused of insularity so library history scholars need to, in some form, evaluate the impact of an institution on a population, and not just assess its influence based on the library staff’s aspirations.

To summarise, it is clear that while there is a great deal written about the social and cultural impact of libraries there is little – particularly in British library history – that explores the potential for these institutions to be either active agents in defining and

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<sup>60</sup> Edwards and Edwards, ‘Culture and the New Iraq’, p.331.

<sup>61</sup> Edwards and Edwards, ‘Culture and the New Iraq’, p.333.

representing national identity, indicators of changes in popular perceptions of national identity and/or utilised by political or cultural elites seeking to (consciously or otherwise) build national identities. Despite the limited research conducted on this topic, various research methods drawn from other disciplines such as museum studies can be used to inform the methodological approach of the current work.

## **V. Theories of Nationalism**

In the words of Benedict Anderson, '[n]ation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse. In contrast to the immense influence that nationalism has exerted on the modern world, plausible theory about it is conspicuously meagre.'<sup>62</sup> The theories relating to nationalism are complex and problematic and it is not viable, within the confines of this thesis, to explore all of the theories and debates surrounding the nation, nationalism and national identity. Instead, this review highlights a selection of key debates in order to contextualise the emergence of a national library in Wales and its role in archiving the nation's past. These include the theories of Elie Kedourie, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Anthony D. Smith, Eric Hobsbawm, John Breuilly and Michael Billig.

The modernist interpretation of nation-building – the model now widely upheld by modern scholars – advocates that nations are essentially modern creations and a product of historical circumstances. The majority of modernists support this basic premise but attribute its development to a variety of factors including ideological, sociocultural, economic and political.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983 (London: Verso, Revised and extended edition, 1991), p.3.

<sup>63</sup> Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: a critical introduction*, 2000 (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, Second edition, 2010), p.86; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), p.24.

Ideological modernists argue that nationalism emerged as an ideology in response to the rapid changes that occurred in Europe during the nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup> They claim that nationalism is ideological because it is an attempt to impose a social order on a society in a state of flux. Elie Kedourie – a forerunner of this theory – argued that ‘nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.’<sup>65</sup> He attributes its ‘invention’ to the intelligentsia who began to rise to prominence following the breakdown of feudalism during the German romantic period. This intelligentsia – alienated from the social doctrine of their antecedents – formed social movements to increase their status and propagate their political ideologies. He argued that nations and nationalism were a modern construction principally orchestrated by the intellectuals and that nationalism fails in its aim to enable individuals to attain self-determination, instead, redirecting attention away from the development of more socially beneficial political systems.<sup>66</sup>

An alternative view to ideological modernism is expounded by scholars like Ernest Gellner. Gellner argues that

We seem to be in the presence of a phenomenon which springs directly and inevitably from basic changes in our shared social condition, from changes in the overall relation between society, culture and polity. The precise appearance and local form of this phenomenon no doubt depends a very great deal on local circumstances which deserve study; but I doubt whether the nuances of nationalist *doctrine* played much part in modifying those circumstances.<sup>67</sup>

Gellner’s theory is focused on dramatic changes in economic production which he argues affects a standardisation of culture. Gellner’s theory is that nations can only evolve from a culturally homogenised group and that this standardisation of culture is a product of an

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<sup>64</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 1960 (Oxford: Blackwell, Expanded fourth edition 1993)

<sup>65</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, p.1.

<sup>66</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 1960.

<sup>67</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p.124.

industrial society, rather than agrarian. Thus power and culture unite: ‘the only way a given culture can protect itself against another one, which already has a protector-state, is to acquire one of its own...so every culture must have its state.’<sup>68</sup> This constructed identity acts as an anchor for an increasingly mobile society and creates a greater attachment to the concept of a nation-state. In Gellner’s view ‘[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they did not exist.’<sup>69</sup> Gellner’s model has been criticised: it is too functionalist; that nationalism and industrialisation do not always coincide; and it does not account for the resurgence of nationalism in advanced industrial societies.<sup>70</sup>

Benedict Anderson’s seminal text *Imagined Communities* takes a different approach to Gellner by categorising nationality and nationalism as cultural artefacts.<sup>71</sup> He defines a nation as ‘an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.’<sup>72</sup> When Anderson uses the term ‘imagined’ it is to describe how a nation – who are unable to connect personally – are still able to visualise themselves as a cohesive group, rather than the term implying an act of falsification. Anderson disagrees with Gellner’s argument that nations are entirely invented.

Anderson’s objective was to discover why and when nationalism flourished, he cites two main causes: the decline of religion and the dynastic realm.<sup>73</sup> In the words of Anderson:

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<sup>68</sup> Ernest Gellner, ‘The Coming of Nationalism and its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class’ in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), pp.98-145, p.110.

<sup>69</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p.168.

<sup>70</sup> B. O’Leary, ‘On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner’s Writings on Nationalism’ in J.A. Hall and I. Jarvie (eds.), *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner* (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), pp.71-112, p.86; K. Minogue, ‘Ernest Gellner and the Dangers of Theorising Nationalism’, in J.A. Hall and I. Jarvie (eds.), *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner* (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), pp.113-128, p.143; John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana, 1994), p.22.

<sup>71</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* 1983 (London: Verso, Revised and extended edition 1991), p.4.

<sup>72</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.6.

<sup>73</sup> Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, p.145.

Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore Anderson is not arguing that nationalism replaced religion and the dynastic realm, instead, how humans perceived the world around them changed dramatically. Anderson highlights the perception of time as key here: 'the medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present.'<sup>75</sup>

Anderson argues that mass print capitalism, which had its origins in the eighteenth century, can be a key part of the process of imagining the nation. Newspapers document selective aspects of a nation's activities brought together on a particular date. Anderson contends that '[t]he arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition...shows that the linkage between them is imagined.'<sup>76</sup> This collection of unrelated stories is read independently and simultaneously by other members of this national group. Developing a connection through print which forms 'the embryo of the nationally imagined community.'<sup>77</sup>

In addition, the decline of Latin and the production of cheaper editions in the vernacular during the nineteenth century created a unified language and a printed archival heritage which, in Anderson's view, is central to the idea of nation. Even though English was predominantly the language of print media in Britain, during this period Welsh publishing flourished.<sup>78</sup> This 'new fixity to language' is particularly relevant to the construction of a national library as print capitalism 'helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation.'<sup>79</sup> However, the surge of Welsh

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<sup>74</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.11.

<sup>75</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.23.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.33.

<sup>77</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.44.

<sup>78</sup> John Davies, *A History of Wales* 1993 (London: Penguin, revised edition 2007), p.404.

<sup>79</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.44.

print media was predominantly driven by the non-conformist movement in Wales which undermines Anderson's theory that religion was largely absent from nation construction. Furthermore, one of the main criticisms of Anderson's work comes from Anthony D. Smith who argues that it is reductive to separate nationalism from religion, particularly in light of the effects of mass religion on nationalism in parts of the Islamic world and Russia.<sup>80</sup>

Michael Billig – a sociologist – builds on the ideas of Gellner and Anderson in his book *Banal Nationalism*. He argues that within established nations there is a continuous reiteration, or, to use Billig's term, 'flagging' of signifiers that act as reminders of nationhood. Therefore, 'identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life' which Billig argues are often overlooked by other nationalism theorists.<sup>81</sup> He opposes the idea that nationalism is in decline, instead he argues that nationalistic practices are absorbed into the fabric of the daily life of an established nation – '[t]he remembering is mindless, occurring as other activities are being consciously engaged in.'<sup>82</sup> National institutions could potentially play a role in this process of 'flagging' creating 'barely conscious reminders of the homeland making 'our' national identity unforgettable.'<sup>83</sup> Within a library context national signifiers could include the texts made available in the public catalogue and the chosen location of the library building.

Political modernism focuses on the effect of political transformations on the development of nationalism. The Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm argues that nations are 'invented traditions'.<sup>84</sup> He defines these traditions as 'a set of practices, normally

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<sup>80</sup> A.D. Smith, 'The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.20, No.3 (1991), pp.358-368.

<sup>81</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), p.8. See also R. Fevre and A. Thompson, 'Social Theory and Welsh Identities' in R. Fevre and A. Thompson (eds.), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University Wales Press, 1999), pp.3-24.

<sup>82</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p.41.

<sup>83</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p.93.

<sup>84</sup> He develops this theory in the following works: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*, 1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)



governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.’<sup>85</sup> Hobsbawm identified a direct correlation between the rise of mass politics and industrialisation between 1870 and 1914 and an increase in invented traditions by ruling elites. He argues that ‘the nineteenth-century liberal ideology of social change systematically failed to provide for the social and authority ties taken for granted in early societies, and created voids which might have to be filled by invented practices.’<sup>86</sup>

Hobsbawm’s major criticism of Gellner’s work was that he primarily focused on modernisation at the top level. Hobsbawm argues that nationalism was ‘constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below’.<sup>87</sup> Hobsbawm highlights the role social historians can play in teasing out ‘the ideas, opinions and feeling at the sub-literary level’ as ‘official ideologies of states’ do not represent the identification processes of all citizens and, crucially, he emphasises that ‘national identification’ can quickly change over time.<sup>88</sup>

Hobsbawm argues that ‘invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion.’<sup>89</sup> Historiography is frequently discussed in nationalism theory, but theorists have interpreted the role of history writing somewhat differently. Classical modernists put little emphasis on the part played by history writing in the construction of nations and national identity, though this position was later challenged by cultural modernists such as Hobsbawm, Ranger and Anderson. Crucially, Hobsbawm and Ranger argue, the ideology of a particular nation is not

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<sup>85</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’ in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1-14, p.1.

<sup>86</sup> Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, p.8.

<sup>87</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.10.

<sup>88</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.11.

<sup>89</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, p.12.

necessarily ‘what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.’<sup>90</sup> This theory is particularly applicable to the national library model where institutionalised selection processes contribute to the construction of the nation’s official memory.

As nationalism flourished during the nineteenth century so too did the academic discipline of history, as universities burgeoned. Some members of the historical profession, legitimatised by their claims to scientificity, supplied nationalistic histories that reinforced specific national identities. Stefan Berger concurs with Hobsbawm and Ranger, but argues that the importance assigned to national histories depends on circumstance: ‘[w]here national history was more difficult to construct and more contested, there it tended to play a much larger role in underpinning national identity. Inversely, where there was a greater consensus on the underpinning of the national storyline, national history had less of a role to play.’<sup>91</sup> Paul Lawrence, interrogates this perceived link between history writing and nationalism and determines that ‘[w]ritten history became important to cultural nationalism because it supplied an authoritative sense of continuity with an (often imaginary) past, and hence a sense of group identity in the present, during a period of rapid social change.’<sup>92</sup>

In Hobsbawm and Ranger’s edited collection *The Invention of Tradition* is an essay by Prys Morgan focused on Welsh national identity specifically during the Romantic period. Morgan emphasises that Wales was not a political state so the focus was primarily on the cultural but ‘the past was very often tattered and threadbare, and so

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<sup>90</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, p.13.

<sup>91</sup> Stefan Berger, ‘The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe’ in Stefan Berger (ed.), *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.30-62, p.37.

<sup>92</sup> Paul Lawrence, ‘Nationalism and Historical Writing’ in John Bruilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.713-730, p. 724.

a great deal of invention was needed.<sup>93</sup> He laments the lack of academic institutions and public libraries where material could have been consulted and critiqued and suggests that this allowed forgeries to go undetected for decades. In response to an identity crisis in Wales brought about by a period of extraordinary change, Morgan argues, a small group of patriots mined the past, modifying the material to create a ‘mythical and romantic Wales’ rooted in the arts and literature.<sup>94</sup> In the latter half of the nineteenth century radical non-conformists were quick to take up the baton as the ‘fresh myth-makers’ and Celticism, which had strong connections to the Welsh language, ‘provided the constricted, pathetically small nation, which had little to commend it in its present state, with an unimaginable grandiose past, by way of consolation.’<sup>95</sup>

It is important to note that in Wales the official language of the state education system was English, but Welsh was taught in the Sunday schools established in Welsh chapels during the Methodist revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which contributed to a growth in Welsh literacy.<sup>96</sup> Hobsbawm asserts that language is one of the chief, in his terms, proto-national bonds (cohesive links used to construct a national identity) even if it is only spoken by a minority, ‘so long as it is a minority of sufficient political weight.’<sup>97</sup> Hobsbawm, like Anderson, contends that language can only become a central proto-national bond with the rise of the industrial age where print technologies enable the dissemination of literature and literacy levels rise through the introduction of state education.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Prys Morgan ‘The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period’ in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.43-100, p.98.

<sup>94</sup> Morgan ‘The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period’, pp.99-100.

<sup>95</sup> Morgan ‘The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period’, p.69.

<sup>96</sup> Glanmor Williams, ‘Language, Literacy and Nationality in Wales’, *History*, Vol.56, No.186 (1971), pp.1-16, p.8, pp.11-12.

<sup>97</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.60.

<sup>98</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.59.

John Breuilly argues that ethnic and national identities are exploited by ruling elites to garner support from the masses. He claims that national identity is malleable and therefore can be manipulated for political gain.<sup>99</sup> The general criticisms levelled at political modernism are as follows: that the founding of the first 'nations' and the nineteenth century political transformations do not tally; that the connection between modern nations and pre-modern ties are ignored; and that too great an emphasis is placed on the effect of political factors.<sup>100</sup>

In contrast to Gellner and Hobsbawm, ethno-symbolists such as Anthony D. Smith argue that although nations and nationalism can be identified as modern, constructed phenomenon, the existence of pre-modern identities (myths and symbols) play a significance role in their creation.<sup>101</sup> Ethno-symbolists argue that one of the objectives of the study of nationalism is to try to determine the conditions under which a nation and/or nationalist movements may develop, and that a modernist approach limits these lines of enquiry by confining the development of nations to the nineteenth century.

Smith argues that

[t]he modern era in this respect resembles a palimpsest on which are recorded experiences and identities of different epochs and a variety of ethnic foundations...to produce the composite type of collective cultural unit which we call the 'nation'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> P.R. Brass, 'Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity among the Muslims of South Asia' in D.Taylor and M.Yapp (eds.), *Political Identity in South Asia* (London & Dublin: Curzon Press, 1979), pp.35-68.

<sup>100</sup> Ozkirimli *Theories of Nationalism*, p.122. This is an ethno-symbolist critique expounded by Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 1995), p.38; Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.42; Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.5; Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, p.41.

<sup>101</sup> The theory of ethno-symbolism is developed in the following works: Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992); John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana, 1994)

<sup>102</sup> Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, pp.59-60.

Smith identifies nationalism as a primarily cultural phenomenon built on myths and memories from the past: ‘memory, almost by definition, is integral to cultural identity, and the cultivation of shared memories is essential to the survival and destiny of such collective identities.’<sup>103</sup> This collective cultural exchange creates what Smith identifies as an ethnic identity. He argues that this ethnic identity may persist in diaspora communities ‘even when long divorced from its homeland, through an intense nostalgia and spiritual attachment.’<sup>104</sup>

In Smith’s discussion of ‘ethnic cores’ and their link to the formation of nations he highlights the role played by malleable heritage and traditions which can be passed from one generation to the next. He argues that ‘certain traditions of images, cults, customs, rites and artefacts, as well as certain events, heroes, landscapes and values, come to form a distinctive repository of ethnic culture, to be drawn upon selectively by successive generations of the community.’<sup>105</sup> Although Smith is not referring specifically to national libraries here, their role as official ‘national’ repositories link them (within the framework of Smith’s theory) directly to nation construction. In addition, the notion of selectivity is pertinent to the national library model which shapes an archival collection according to a specific vision of a nation and its past.

Like Kedourie, Smith focuses on the role of the intelligentsia. However, Smith does not view the intelligentsia as inventors of an ideology but, instead, as (re)discoverers of the past(s) ‘that will elevate the people and their vernacular culture to centre stage, often in place of (or reinterpreting) the old religious traditions.’<sup>106</sup> These ‘nationalist educator-intellectuals’ can identify examples from the ethnic past from which to construct historical traditions and signifiers ‘into a composite nationalist mythology.’<sup>107</sup> Therefore

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<sup>103</sup> A.D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.10.

<sup>104</sup> A.D. Smith, *National Identity* (London and New York: Penguin, 1991), p.23.

<sup>105</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.38.

<sup>106</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.64.

<sup>107</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.66.

Smith does not dispute the emergence of nationalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth century but rejects the concept of entirely invented traditions.

There are critics of this ethno-symbolic approach.<sup>108</sup> The main objections are the use of the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ within the context of both a pre and post-industrial society; the underestimation of the difference between an agrarian and an industrial community; the misjudgement of the potential fluidity of identities; and the emphasis placed on the relationship between pre-modern belief systems and the foundations of the modern nation.<sup>109</sup>

The nationalism debate, although complex, will be used to frame the current work in order to explore the NLW’s potential role as a nation-building institution, as part of an emergent Welsh nationalist movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The most pertinent theories for studying this cultural institution are those which consider the role of the past in identity construction and the part played by the development of book capitalism. Therefore Hobsbawn’s questioning of the role that history can play in legitimising a nation’s existence is particularly relevant, alongside Anderson’s exploration of the imagined community and the development of mass printed materials. In order to interrogate the use of the past by the NLW the existence of pre-modern identities, as outlined by Smith, need to be determined or, the presence of entirely invented traditions should be identified, as defined by Gellner. However, Anderson’s theory on the decline of religion needs adapting as Welsh nationalism came out of a rise in non-conformity, which did not replace religion but, instead, existed concurrently.

Furthermore, the political and cultural elite of Wales led the campaign to establish the NLW and were directly involved in its management. Therefore the

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<sup>108</sup> Critics of ethno-symbolism include O’Leary, ‘On the Nature of Nationalism’, pp.71-112; K. Symmons-Symonolewicz, ‘The Concept of Nationhood: Towards a Theoretical Clarification’, *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol.XII, No.2 (1985), pp.215-222.

<sup>109</sup> Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, p.183.

theoretical debates focused on the intelligentsia's role in the (re)inventing of a nation are key to this discussion. The theoretical model expounded by Smith appears to be the most appropriate as he perceives these 'nationalist educator-intellectuals' as excavators of the past who select and (re)interpret these historical traditions in an attempt to construct a coherent national mythology.

As well as the broader theoretical debates on nationalism there also exists a body of literature specifically focused on the development of Welsh nationalism. In the following section several of these debates relevant to the thesis will be explored in greater depth to continue to develop a framework in which to explore the construct of the NLW and its potential connection to Welsh national identity.

## **VI. National Identity in Wales**

Welsh historical studies started to flourish as a scholarly discipline from the 1960s onwards, cultivated by innovators such as David Williams and Glanmor Williams.<sup>110</sup> There is an expanding body of work that explores the theme of national identity in Wales, so this section focuses primarily on key texts and theories which link specifically to the period c.1840-1916, and may shed light on the development of the NLW.

In 1975 Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* was published. This work contends that Britain had 'internal colonies' in the Celtic fringe, similar to the external colonisation model.<sup>111</sup> Hechter argues that Wales was dependent on the British economic structure and therefore susceptible to exploitation by the 'coloniser' who is able to redistribute wealth according to its priorities. As a result, the colony becomes vulnerable and 'a cultural division of labour' can appear, fuelling the development of ethnic

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<sup>110</sup> Between 1960-1972 two major Welsh focused academic journals were founded *Welsh History Review* and *Llafur*. David Williams *History of Modern Wales* (London: John Murray, 1950); Glanmor Williams, *Religion, Language and Nationality in Wales: Historical Essays* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979). See also A.H. Dodd 'Nationalism in Wales: A Historical Assessment', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Part 1 (1970), pp.33-49; Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.6, No.1 (1971), pp.153-172.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), pp.8-10.

identities.<sup>112</sup> Hechter argues that the exploitation of the ‘peripheral’ culture can result in this group further defining their identity in contrast to the ‘core’ culture.<sup>113</sup> Although now widely criticised, Hechter’s work stimulated multiple studies which questioned his thesis and interrogated further the development of Welsh nationalism within a British framework.<sup>114</sup>

David L. Adamson argues that Hechter’s thesis does not stand up to scrutiny.<sup>115</sup> Rather than capital always flowing back to England from Wales during the industrial boom, Adamson contends that there was a ‘pattern of capital accumulation in Wales’ and Welsh industrialists and entrepreneurs benefitted, with some funding nationalistic projects such as the building of the library and museum.<sup>116</sup> Secondly, Adamson questions Hechter’s claim that positions of influence and authority were largely inaccessible to the Welsh population.<sup>117</sup> Instead, Adamson emphasises the pivotal role played by Welsh-speaking, non-conformist Liberals in British politics during the 1890s in ‘propagating specifically Welsh legislation.’<sup>118</sup> The emergence of the Cymru Fydd movement supported by Welsh non-conformist elites and prominent members of the Welsh diaspora of London was an indication, in Adamson’s words, that ‘the cultural nationalism of the

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<sup>112</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, p.38.

<sup>113</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, p.38.

<sup>114</sup> R. James Sacouman, ‘Broken-up Canada and Breaking-up Britain: Some Comparative Lessons in Uneven Development, Regionalism and Nationalism During the Current Crisis’ in Gareth Rees, Janet Bujra, Paul Littlewood, Howard Newby and Teresa L. Rees (eds.), *Political Action and Social Identity: Class, Locality and Identity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.65-90, p.70. These studies include Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1977) particularly Chapter 4: ‘Culture and Politics in Wales’, pp.185-204; John Lovering, ‘Theory of the “Internal Colony” and the Political Economy of Wales’, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, No.10 (1978), pp.55-67; Glyn Williams, ‘Economic Development, Social Structure and Contemporary Nationalism in Wales’, *Review*, Vol.5, No.2 (1981), pp.275-310; Charlotte Aull Davies, *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York & London: Praeger, 1989); Neil Evans, ‘Internal colonialism? Colonization, economic development and political mobilization in Wales, Scotland and Ireland’ in G. Day and G. Rees (eds.), *Regions, Nations and European Integration: Remaking the Celtic Periphery* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), pp.235-264; David L. Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991); R. Fevre and A. Thompson, ‘Social Theory and Welsh Identities’, pp.3-24; Chris Williams, ‘Problematising Wales’ in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds.), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp.3-22.

<sup>115</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.183.

<sup>116</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.183.

<sup>117</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, p.9.

<sup>118</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.121



previous decades had now become political.<sup>119</sup> However, this political nationalism which focused on home rule was short-lived as a result of the deep divisions in Wales, particularly between north and south. Adamson argues that the Liberals distanced themselves from these nationalist demands which slowly became ‘the preoccupation of Welsh intellectuals.’<sup>120</sup>

Adamson further develops this idea in a later essay titled ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’ in which he identifies the key role of the intellectual in defining a nation, particularly through the establishment of educational and cultural institutions.<sup>121</sup> He argues that their direct involvement in fields such as literature, art, politics, education, historiography and language advanced ‘a sense of Welsh nationhood and themselves drawing inspiration from the intellectual climate they were themselves contributing to.’<sup>122</sup> This sense of nationhood is embodied in the term *gwerin* which represents the Welsh as an ancient, rural people unfettered by class and the development of industrialisation.<sup>123</sup> ‘The *gwerin* was an intellectual construct evident in all spheres of intellectual activity in Wales, reproduced as the image of the nation and itself reproducing that image.’<sup>124</sup> Adamson argues that ‘the conception of the *gwerin*...has prevailed in the cultural institutions’ leaving little room for multiple national identities in the official ‘story’ of Wales.<sup>125</sup> Although he focuses primarily on the intellectuals’ influence on the development of the national museums of Wales, his thesis is also pertinent to the establishment of the NLW. Therefore, in contrast to Hechter, Adamson’s central

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<sup>119</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.121.

<sup>120</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.123.

<sup>121</sup> David L. Adamson, ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’ in R. Fevre and A. Thompson (eds.), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University Wales Press, 1999), pp.48-68.

<sup>122</sup> Adamson, ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’, p.49, p.58.

<sup>123</sup> Adamson, ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’, p.58. The direct translation of *gwerin* is ordinary folk, populace, the peasantry, but during this period it was a term used to describe the native and rural Welsh communities who represented the ‘true’ Wales.

<sup>124</sup> Adamson, ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’, p.67.

<sup>125</sup> Adamson, ‘The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales’, p.67.

argument is that '[i]t is the internal conditions of the Welsh social formation which promoted the development of nationalism, rather than the existence of an exploitative relationship with the English state.'<sup>126</sup>

Graham Day and Richard Suggett argue that the 'indigenous middle class...hijacked Welsh national identity and made it their own, harnessing institutions and ideology into the formidable construct of Liberal nonconformity.'<sup>127</sup> They trace the origins of this movement back to early nineteenth-century Welsh land disputes between Welsh-speaking tenant farmers and English-speaking Tory landowners. It was these clashes that became the ideological basis for the Welsh Liberals' campaign and this aided the development of a distinct Welsh national identity.<sup>128</sup> Day and Suggett highlight the Liberals' early ambivalence towards the Welsh language and their enthusiasm for the use of English in the new Welsh educational institutions.<sup>129</sup> However, as soon as the establishment of a higher education system in Wales was complete 'a striking inversion of these ideas took place: the achievement is reinterpreted as an expression of the innate qualities of Welsh.'<sup>130</sup> As a result, the Welsh language was subsumed into the academic sphere portrayed as a unique asset by this burgeoning Welsh learned subset.

Day and Suggett argue that this educational movement did not come from below but, instead, was 'a process of building up, and consolidating, the position of a middle class. The people were called upon for support only when it was clear that the middle classes could not secure their goals unaided.'<sup>131</sup> Therefore this intellectual class controlled the means of communicating cultural traditions which became fixated on an antiquated

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<sup>126</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.184.

<sup>127</sup> Graham Day and Richard Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness: Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Wales' in G. Rees, J. Bujra, P. Littlewood, H. Newby and T.L. Rees (eds.), *Political Action and Social Identity Class, Locality and Ideology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.91-115, p.99.

<sup>128</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.100.

<sup>129</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.110.

<sup>130</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.111.

<sup>131</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.111.

rural Wales and discounted the industrial boom.<sup>132</sup> Day and Suggett's focus is primarily on the development of a higher education system in Wales but their theoretical model is applicable to the establishment of the NLW, particularly as a number of individuals involved with the university were also active campaigners in the NLW movement. This thesis will question whether the library contributed to this specifically class-based Welshness.

During the mid-1980s – following a turbulent time in Wales which featured the anti-devolution vote of 1979 and the defeat of the Miners' Strike in 1984 – a series of impactful works relating to Wales and national identity were published. Kenneth O. Morgan's *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* documents the changes brought about following the rise of a new political class in Wales who were often non-conformists driven by a desire for social reform. He argues that '[b]y the 1880s...the concepts of Wales and Welshness were beginning to assume a more coherent form.'<sup>133</sup> Merfyn Jones concurs with Morgan, but stresses that 'Welshness thus became a cause to which one adhered, rather than a country to which one belonged. National identity came to be associated with specific political and religious beliefs.'<sup>134</sup>

One of the most influential of the 1980s publications was the Marxist historian Gwyn A. Williams' *When was Wales?* Although this work is principally a concise history of Wales it also contains a strong polemical discourse which outlines a set of predictions for Wales' future – influenced by the political climate of the 1980s – including the death of the Welsh language and the disappearance of Welsh culture in the wake of increased homogenisation of British identity. Like Hobsbawm and Anderson, Williams adopts a modernist approach. He asserts that 'Wales is impossible. A country called Wales only

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<sup>132</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.112.

<sup>133</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: A History of Modern Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.4.

<sup>134</sup> Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.31, No.4 (1992), pp.330-357, p.338.

exists because they invented themselves' and stresses that during the process of the 'Welsh making and remaking of themselves, a sense of history has been central.'<sup>135</sup> He reiterates that '[t]he Welsh or their effective movers and shapers have repeatedly employed history to make a usable past, to turn a past into an instrument with which a present can build a future.'<sup>136</sup> Like Gwyn A. Williams, Geraint H. Jenkins examines Wales through the lens of Anderson's theory and concludes that 'Wales is an imagined community, a construct which, amoeba-like, changes its shape and character according to the desires of its people and the influence of external forces.'<sup>137</sup>

Kenneth O. Morgan asserts that '[i]f there was an outstanding cradle of the national revival in modern Wales, it may be found not in the sparsely populated countryside...but amidst the grimy iron-works and winding shafts of the working-class metropolis of Merthyr Tydfil.'<sup>138</sup> Gwyn A. Williams also examines the effect of the industrial revolution on Wales during this period. In Williams' view it is the collision of the pastoral and industrial spheres during the late nineteenth century that fuelled a national reawakening within Wales:

[w]hat has come to be thought of as 'traditional', Nonconformist, radical Welsh-speaking Wales in particular, that Wales which created so many of the characteristic Welsh institutions, notably the educational, was in some basic senses a by-product of this industrialization, without which its success would have been impossible. On the other hand, that 'traditional' Wales was, in some other very real sense, a reaction against the new Wales. Its roots and its thinking and emotional life were in the other Wales which was being made marginal; its ideology grew from that marginal society.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Black Raven, 1985), p.2, p.5.

<sup>136</sup> Williams, *When was Wales?*, p.304.

<sup>137</sup> G. H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.301.

<sup>138</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, pp.8-9.

<sup>139</sup> Williams, *When was Wales?*, pp.180-181.

The NLW epitomised ‘Welsh’ Wales and was championed by this ‘traditional’ group to which Williams is referring. However, as Williams argues, its existence was only made possible by the industrial boom in Wales, through the contributions of well-known industrialists, as well as many smaller donations from the workers themselves. But the NLW came to represent everything that the ‘new’ Wales was not, which was expressed in the chosen location, prioritised collections and the type of users in the reading room. The library reinforced this ‘traditional’ ideology and appears to have been reluctant to acknowledge the emerging modern Wales which thrived during this period.

The simultaneous existence of multiple Welsh identities is expressed by Dai Smith in his aphorism ‘Wales is a singular noun but a plural experience.’<sup>140</sup> This notion of a divided Wales has become known as the ‘Three Wales model’.<sup>141</sup> This model divides Wales into three distinct political and geographical areas: ‘Y Fro Cymraeg’ represents the Welsh-speaking areas of north and mid Wales; ‘Welsh Wales’ covers the southern Anglophone valleys; and the eastern borders and Pembrokeshire are labelled as ‘British Wales’.<sup>142</sup> Gwyn A. Williams emphasises the complexity and multiplicity of these Welsh identities: ‘[f]ragmented and divergent societies...propelled along different historic routes and into different historic time scales.’<sup>143</sup> Williams argued that ‘[i]ndustrial capitalism splintered Wales’ which has led to a perpetual disconnect between the *gwerin* rural, monoglot communities of north and mid Wales, defined as the genuine national culture, and the industrial, bilingual areas of the south, which failed to find its position within the national discourse until at least the 1960s.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Dai Smith, *Wales: A Question of History*, 1984 (Bridgend: Seren, completely revised edition of *Wales! Wales?* with a new title, 1999), p.36. See also Bill Jones, ‘Banqueting at a Moveable Feast: Wales 1870-1914’ in G.E. Jones and D. Smith (eds.), *The People of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 1999), pp.145-178.

<sup>141</sup> Dennis Balsom, ‘The Three-Wales model’ in John Osmond (ed.), *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s* (Llandysul: Gomer, 1985), pp.1-17.

<sup>142</sup> Balsom, ‘The Three-Wales model’, pp.1-17.

<sup>143</sup> Williams, *When was Wales?*, p.182.

<sup>144</sup> Williams, *When was Wales?*, p.182.

To summarise, although several of Wales' prominent cultural institutions have been identified as nation-building tools and examined through the various lenses of national identity theory, the NLW has not, until now, been selected as a case study. Therefore the review of this relevant literature on national identity in Wales will contextualise a study of this library system.

The role of the Liberal, non-conformist, intellectual elites in creating and contributing to a conception of Welsh national identity is key to this study. Also the progression of Welsh cultural nationalism into political nationalism during the 1890s coincides with the renewal of the NLW campaign and, although relatively short-lived, secured the library's future through the development of Welsh legislation. Finally, the creation of these Welsh institutions is framed by two co-existing environments: the declining, traditional rural Wales and the thriving, modern industrial landscape. Both contributed to the formation of these cultural institutions as, on the one hand, the NLW was created as part of a 'traditional' reaction against the development of modern Wales. On the other, establishments such as the library were only made possible by public donations which often came from the leading industrialists and entrepreneurs of the day, strengthening the position of this burgeoning middle class.

## **VII. Conclusion**

This thesis adopts certain aspects of the 'new' library history philosophy, in particular, an interdisciplinary approach to stimulate new methodologies coupled with a rigorous interrogation of the perception of libraries as innately apolitical. Thus far this approach has been adopted by other researchers when examining a variety of library institutions, but not, to any extent, in the analysis of national libraries. As demonstrated, writing on national libraries is often old-fashioned, dominated by works that prioritise fact-collecting over historical synthesis.

The review of the current literature on the topic of libraries and national identity reveals a neglected area of research, overlooked even in more complex studies of library history, with British libraries almost entirely absent. This thesis builds on the small body of work on libraries and national identity, using the NLW as a case study, to explore the connection between the NLW and Welsh national identity in the period c.1840-1916. Furthermore, the extensive research on national identity undertaken in other disciplines, where institutions are examined through the lens of nationalism theory, provide a framework which can be adapted to suit the present research. These adopted methodologies may help to uncover to what extent those involved in establishing and managing the library sought to instil a particular version of Welsh national identity, and, how far the library's decisions were shaped by its users.

Libraries, it appears, have been overlooked compared with other cultural institutions whose role in the formation of national consciousness, even in countries such as Britain, have been extensively analysed. Rhiannon Mason's work on Wales' museums and national identity is particularly useful here, as she tackles the complex task of separating the various elements of a museum's collection into those that have been amassed by chance and those which have been deliberately selected. The categorisation of a collection provides opportunities to pinpoint particular selection processes and to identify possible evidence of political and nationalistic agendas.

Some library historians have begun to examine the library system through the various lenses of nationalism and national identity theory, but there is still much work to be done. As the literature on national identity demonstrates, identity, as a concept, is difficult to define: it is multifaceted and constantly shifting in reaction to circumstances. This thesis draws on these various theoretical frameworks outlined above to investigate the NLW's role, and, explore, to what extent the library may be an indicator of a shift in

popular perceptions of national identity, or if there is evidence to suggest that it was manipulated by political and cultural elites seeking to build national identities.

There exists an extensive body of work on Wales and national identity and several studies that examine isolated aspects of Wales' library history, but no substantial literature that connects these strands together. The two main studies of the NLW rely heavily on official institutional records such as annual reports and meeting minutes which provide detailed information on the internal running of the NLW, but limited data on the impact of the library on users and the wider public. Although these records also dominate the current research they are augmented with other material such as readers registers, epistolary exchanges with library donors, correspondence with the Workers' Education Association on the topic of a travelling library scheme, and newspaper reports on the library's reception and impact. Although the combination of a variety of research material makes the work more challenging, it has yielded more complex and nuanced results.

In summation, this thesis investigates the everyday workings of the NLW during this period – within the context of Wales' cultural and political circumstances – to explore the connection between the NLW and Welsh identity construction. The research also offers opportunities to compare the proposed aims of the library with its later actions; to consider the importance of this new national institution to Welsh communities (both inside and outside Wales); to review the influence commanded by donors such as John Williams and members of staff like John Ballinger; and to attempt to gauge the impact of the library on its many and varied users.

### **VIII. Methods and Sources**

This section outlines the methodological approach of the current work by way of a discussion of the various approaches adopted and the main sources used in each chapter. As the literature review illustrates, there is only a limited body of work that evaluates national libraries within the context of national identities, therefore the current work



begins to redress this gap in the literature. The thesis evaluates the development of the NLW over a relatively lengthy time period in order to encompass both the dialogues that occurred c.1840-1875 which considered the feasibility of founding a national library and the library's first ten years as an operational institution from 1907. Thus, each phase in the library's progression is contextualised within the wider political and cultural milieu of Wales and, where appropriate, the broader British political climate.

The NLW's evolution can be divided into three distinct phases: the conception, the formation and the operation. These phases are analysed in chronological order to demonstrate in what way the political and cultural changes in Wales during this period shaped the evolution of the NLW. In turn, each phase is connected to a particular key group: the founders, the subscribers and the users. These groupings are not exclusive as some individuals are present in every group whereas others only inhabit one. For example, an individual can be a member of the founding committee, give a subscription to the library building fund and have used the reading room when it opened to the public. Equally, a person could have pledged a subscription to the library but never have gone on to use any of the services. This dual approach seeks to demonstrate how external circumstances shaped the institution's development and in what ways individuals interacted with the concept and, later, an actual NLW.

This methodological approach prevents the writing of a closed-circuit history of the NLW which would focus primarily on the institutional workings of the library and not engage with the environment in which the library was founded or those people beyond the library staff and significant donors who were involved. This more comprehensive approach offers further insights into the library's connection and interaction with Welsh national identity, both in terms of the impact of Welsh nationalism on the library and the contribution the library may have made to the development of a distinct Welsh national identity.

The NLW is an appropriate case study, partly because national libraries and national identity are a particularly under-researched topic, but also because the NLW was established within the context of a period of Welsh cultural and political change, which saw a number of other public institutions and organisations founded in Wales. Institutions such as the National Museum of Wales have been examined within the context of this late-nineteenth century assertion of Welsh national identity, but the NLW has, so far, been overlooked.

Also the NLW is a relatively uncomplicated model of a national library which was built specifically for the purpose, rather than, as is the case for a number of other national libraries, morphing from a public library into a national institution. The simplicity of this model enables the library's development to be traced from concept to reality. Furthermore, there is an abundance of source material relating to the NLW that documents not only its genesis in great detail, but also its subsequent development and usage.

During this time period the majority of the NLW's official documents (minutes, reports etc.) were written in English as was most of the official correspondence exchanged with the library, which is likely the result of Ballinger not being a fluent Welsh speaker. Most of the University College of Wales' (UCW) documents consulted were in English apart from a small amount of Thomas Charles Edwards' private correspondence relating to his fundraising trip to North America. The documents relating to the running of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Cymdethias/ Society were, on the whole, written in Welsh. Also some of the newspapers and periodicals consulted required translation. Attending private Welsh classes – helpfully structured around library-related vocabulary – meant that key Welsh source material could be identified and accurately translated. Today the NLW is predominantly a Welsh-speaking institution which provided a network of support and advice for a Welsh learner. A selection of Welsh language source material is quoted in

the thesis and in each instance an English translation is provided, either in brackets or a footnote.

Chapter two situates the campaign to secure the NLW within the wider cultural and political framework of Wales. It seeks to question how the idea for a NLW was conceived and why the campaign truly took hold in the mid-1890s. Also, this section investigates the role of key individuals and attempts to gauge their influence on the library's development. Distinct from other studies of the NLW, this thesis analyses material that documents the British government's private discussions on the location of the NLW which undermines the significance attributed to the Aberystwyth campaign group's official proposal documents by previous historians of the library.

Since the NLW, from 1873 onwards, was a subsidiary of the UCW's library, its development (or lack of) can be traced through this archive. Material that is particularly valuable for this investigation are the UCW annual reports, reports to the court of governors and court and council minutes which have been consulted from 1873 to 1900. The annual reports and the reports to the court of governors both contained sections dedicated to the college's museum and library, so this meant that relevant information in these documents could be pinpointed relatively easily.

The court and council minutes were slightly more challenging as library matters were not necessarily discussed separately. Therefore these minutes were consulted in full, by hand, for the relevant time block (1873-1900). Further information on an extensive fundraising trip to North America in aid of the College Library was extracted from a college report listing the contributions. Following the resurrection of the Welsh library appeal committee in 1896 matters discussed by the court and council could be cross-referenced with the committee minute book which, invariably, provided more detail. Alongside the consultation of these university documents, a search of local contemporary newspapers has been conducted using key word searches in both English and Welsh to

identify any relevant articles on the proposed NLW before 1873 and while it was housed by the UCW.<sup>145</sup>

The minute book of the Welsh Library committee (1896-1906) is available to access at the NLW. Consulted in full, this minute book offers an insight into how the campaign was organised and developed as well as listing the various individuals involved. Further research into the backgrounds of these individuals, using the free resource Welsh Biography Online, traces a number of them back to a nationalistic Welsh cultural group based at Oxford in the 1880s: Cymdeithas/Society Dafydd ap Gwilym. Fortunately, the majority of this society's archive is held by the NLW as part of Thomas Iorwerth Ellis's papers (son of Thomas Edward Ellis) therefore it was possible to confirm their membership of the society. This group became increasingly involved in the library and there is evidence of their previous cultural interests influencing the library's decision-making process.

It is clear that the campaign's progress during the 1890s was part of the wider Welsh Liberal political movement which shed light on Welsh issues in Parliament. Members such as John Herbert Lewis campaigned tirelessly in the House of Commons for Wales to be granted funds to develop national cultural institutions, like the museum and library. These debates and contributions of key individuals are available via Historical Hansard Online, so an analysis of this source material, combined with the committee minutes, offers insights into why the library campaign was successful at this particular juncture.

In 1903 the British Treasury promised unspecified financial assistance so a national library and museum could be established in Wales. The decision on where these

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<sup>145</sup> The free online resource Welsh Newspapers Online has made it possible to search up to 120 newspapers which would have been extremely time consuming exercise to do by hand. Key word searches included Welsh library/ Llyfrgell Gymraeg, National Library of Wales/ Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, College library/ Llyfrgell y Coleg etc.

institutions were to be situated and if they were to be built together or separately was placed in the hands of a Privy Council committee made up of three men. Several Welsh towns including Aberystwyth and Cardiff expressed interest in hosting one or more of these cultural institutions and submitted published statements to the Privy Council committee which are available for consultation.

Other studies of the NLW have argued that the content of these statements significantly influenced the committee's decision to site the museum in Cardiff and the library in Aberystwyth. In contrast, this study looks beyond the NLW archive to investigate how the whole situation in Wales was viewed and discussed by the British government, specifically the Board of Education and the Treasury. A collection of documents in the National Archives at Kew entitled 'Records of the Privy Council, Wales: Establishment of National Museum and National Library', consulted in full, reveals that the location decision had already been made before the final statements were submitted and that the statements were, instead, used to measure financial support for these projects in Wales.

Once the location of the NLW had been decided, sourcing capital to build and stock it was a high priority. The contributions to the building fund came from a variety of social groups over a large geographical area. Chapter three is an analysis of these contributions, and sheds light on who pledged money to the fund, where subscribers came from (in or outside Wales) and questions why they might have subscribed.

There is a significant collection of relevant source material relating to the building fund and the most useful is the comprehensive printed list of subscribers and their financial pledges, which was published by the library in 1910. Since the library put a great deal of effort into collating this information (as the publication of such booklets encouraged others to donate) it is already well presented in a tabular form and has been organised into a database enabling rigorous analysis. The information included about a

person, such as title, name and address, has been used to locate the individual's census form from 1911 (via the subscription service Find My Past), with approximately a 90% success rate. This additional data has also been entered providing new insights into the subscribers' lives such as their profession and place of birth.

Through the use of the Welsh Library Appeal Committee Minutes (1903-1906) this chapter investigates how the Westminster grants proposal framed the library's fundraising drive, forcing the committee to secure widespread support rather than the backing of just a few wealthy philanthropists. This analysis contradicts previous opinion that there was an unprovoked swell of support for the NLW. In addition, a selection of canvassing letters and pamphlets, written in different forms, reveals that the library committee attempted to maximise donations by tailoring their correspondence to particular target audiences, honing their craft over time. These letters combined with newspaper reports, which document public fundraising meetings, demonstrate the library's use of nationalistic tactics in an attempt to secure financial assistance. The chapter interrogates this approach and questions, in light of subscribers not always fulfilling their pledges, whether another tactic may have been more successful.

Chapter four examines the library's first ten years as an operational institution and presents a detailed analysis of the early collection policy to determine how influential the agendas (implicit and explicit) of key individuals were on decision-making processes. The evidence suggests that the conception of 'Wales' employed by the library was focused primarily on the nation's role in a historical context and reflected the Welsh cultural revival of the eighteenth century. In addition, this chapter argues that initially the library made little attempt to actively engage with a range of constituencies beyond a number of symbolic appointments to the court, but their later involvement with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) extended their remit.

Particularly valuable for this part of the study are the official administrative documents printed by the library which have been consulted in full for the period 1907-1916. These include *The National Library of Wales Charter of Incorporation and report on the progress of the library* (which contains full lists of court and council membership), further periodic progress reports, the annual reports, official library letter books, court of governors and council minutes and the books committee minutes. This thesis does not examine records of items donated by the public as the focus is on the library's deliberate selection of material, be it within the confines of the open market.

The books committee operated from 1912, before this date the majority of manuscript purchasing decisions were made by the council. In order to analyse the library's purchasing history for a ten year period it was necessary to extract data from the council minutes, progress reports and books committee minutes in order to get an accurate picture of this decision-making process. This information was organised into a spreadsheet and each item was categorised using the Library of Congress classification system (this was the system the library used during this period). This method has enabled detailed analysis to be conducted which reveals popular subjects such as religion, history and literature as well as those which were absent such as science and technology. In some circumstances it was possible to pinpoint who was in a meeting when a particular purchasing decision was made which, in some cases, has been linked to an individuals' specialism or interests. In addition, speeches given to the Welsh Bibliographical Society by key members of the library management as well as their own writings has supplemented the spreadsheet analysis by providing further insights into the group's ethos and buying strategy.

Although not discussed by the books committee (they generally focused on large manuscript purchases) the library also purchased printed books of which records survive from April 1910 onwards. These are listed in one volume for this period and were

therefore much easier to analyse than the manuscript purchases which were scattered across various volumes. The printed book purchases need to be viewed within the context of the library's inclusion in the Copyright Act from July 1912. As a result of the granting of this status the NLW only needed to purchase books outside of the remit of the Act such as foreign language texts or to fill gaps in the collection. Nevertheless, these decisions shed light on the library's relatively substantial investment in the book box outreach scheme and their attempts to build a larger Celtic section.

The remainder of the thesis evaluates how the NLW's services were used by the public (1909-1916) and compares this usage with the vision and intentions of the founders, examined in chapter four. Chapter five presents the findings of some new research into the early readers of the library using data extracted from a selection of readers registers, 1909-1912. This reader group is compared with two external user groups – educational class attendees in Wales who received book boxes and a group of internees in the Ruhleben camp in Berlin who were sent reading material – revealing quite different user interactions. The chapter compares the user experiences which were curated by the library (the reading room and Ruhleben camp) with the self-curated book box scheme, where class tutors had free reign to request items. The evidence suggests that when the library had influence on the selection process it attempted, consciously or not, to reinforce a particular version of Welsh national identity.

Before moving on to a discussion of how the readers' data was collated it is worth identifying two works on the history of reading, both studies of American library readership, which inform the methodological approach of the current work. The latter section of the thesis is an analysis of data extracted from the NLW's early readers registers which reveals, for the first time, who used the library and what they were reading. This raw data is augmented with information from the 1911 UK Census and the NLW online catalogue, which is amalgamated into one database for analysis.



Christine Pawley's influential study focuses on the Osage public library in Iowa and reading practices during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>146</sup> It was one of the first studies to examine a public library's circulation records, as previous works had mainly focused on subscription libraries. Pawley uses accessions and circulation records to explore how the library constructed a collection and in what ways the library was used by different groups. In this study she uses the statistical data to develop reader case studies based on census records, while positioning the library within the wider social and cultural context of the area to further interrogate the reader experience.<sup>147</sup>

Frank Felsenstein and James J. Connolly's recent work *What Middletown Read* builds on Pawley's research, which they argue 'succeeds in setting these records and the patterns they reveal into a richly drawn social portrait...both within the social patterns of a community and within its print culture.'<sup>148</sup> *What Middletown Read* analyses circulation records of the Muncie Public Library, 1891-1902. The database containing information about the readers and books borrowed has been developed into a free, searchable online resource with approximately 175,000 loans recorded.<sup>149</sup>

Like Pawley, Felsenstein and Connolly use this research to 'reframe our understanding of the historical place of these institutions in their communities and in the wider society', echoing Black's argument that library history, at its centre, should be a study of historic societies.<sup>150</sup> This work defines the library borrower as an 'active agent' in shaping the reading experience, rather than only focusing on the influence of library management and patrons.<sup>151</sup> The study also uses census data as well as diaries and other community records to further develop reader profiles.

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<sup>146</sup> Christine Pawley, *Reading on the Middle Border: The Culture of Print in Late-Nineteenth-Century Osage, Iowa* (Boston: University of Massachusetts, 2001)

<sup>147</sup> Pawley, *Reading on the Middle Border*, pp.1-8.

<sup>148</sup> Frank Felsenstein and James J. Connolly, *What Middletown Read: Print Culture in an American Small City* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), pp.9-10.

<sup>149</sup> What Middletown Read Website, <http://www.bsu.edu/libraries/wmr/>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016.

<sup>150</sup> Felsenstein and Connolly, *What Middletown Read*, p.7.

<sup>151</sup> Felsenstein and Connolly, *What Middletown Read*, p.7.

Similar to the current work, Felsenstein and Connolly acknowledge the limitations of such a study: '[the] database offers us a glimpse...There is not enough in it to reconstruct the whole of their mental words, nor even to trace all of their reading choices...But we can gain a fuller sense of one community's print culture and a deeper appreciation of the ways in which library books and other printed material helped...[borrowers] to explore the world.'<sup>152</sup> In this thesis the context is national rather than regional, but the aims are aligned: to position the NLW's reading patterns within the wider social context to explore in what ways reading was part of people's everyday lives.

The extensive NLW's register of readers 1909-1912 records on a given day every reader's name, often their location and the books and manuscripts (MSS) they requested. This record offers a vital insight into the type of people who used the library, where they came from and the material they accessed. In total, during the period April 1909 – August 1912, 364 unique readers used the library's reading room services, some were frequent visitors, others only occasional. Altogether, the readers consulted 1238 unique books, 103 manuscript collections, ten map collections and three sets of prints. Items were consulted with varying degrees of regularity resulting in 8906 transactions: a transaction being every time a reader requested an item.

This information is organised into a database, and, like the subscribers data, has been further augmented with the readers' personal information from the 1911 UK Census, creating a more detailed picture of the NLW's first readers. Compared to the subscribers, locating readers on the census was more difficult because the register is a handwritten document which was completed on a daily basis by library staff, rather than a printed list including full addresses. In places, the register lacks information or is unreadable so, in terms of locating a reader on the census, the success rate was approximately 80%.

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<sup>152</sup> Felsenstein and Connolly, *What Middletown Read*, p.13.

The book information extracted from the registers is expanded upon using the NLW's current online catalogue which contains almost all of the titles requested as, unlike a public library, the NLW has continued to build on its collection with only minor weeding. Therefore details such as author's name, date of publication and the language of the text can also be included in the database. Like the items purchased (discussed in chapter 4), the books and MSS requested are also categorised using the Library of Congress system, and it was possible to identify the category of 98% of the items. In chapter five, the statistical analysis of this data is presented in tandem with a number of detailed reader profiles.

The NLW also offered services beyond the reading room and in particular a book box scheme which loaned books to the WEA classes and other tutorial classes operating in Wales, from 1914 onwards. The most relevant documents for a study of this scheme are the files containing correspondence between the library and the class organisers and various book lists for the different classes held. Chapter five focuses on the inception and early workings of this scheme, so the material from 1912-1916, which equates to approximately 160 letters and thirty book lists, has been consulted in full. All of the book lists include details of the full address of each class, so chapter five maps these locations which reveals to what extent the library was serving the various regions of Wales. In addition, the type of books requested for these classes are compared with the items requested in the reading room, revealing a stark contrast between the two groups.

After the declaration of war in 1914, the NLW was involved in a national scheme to provide soldiers with books, entitled 'Books for Troops'. There are records held at the NLW that document their involvement and most relevant to the current work is the correspondence that relates to a selection of books that were sent to Welsh internees held in the Ruhleben Camp in Berlin in 1915. These internees contacted the UCW requesting Welsh material to be sent to them and the request was then passed on to the NLW. It is

clear from the correspondence that the internees specifically requested material relating to Wales and the Welsh language for educational purposes as part of the micro-university system developed at Ruhleben.

As a result of this correspondence, the library appealed to the nation via newspaper advertisements and request letters to donate books to this particular cause. The library also selected stock themselves to send which can be identified in the records. The titles chosen by the NLW are rather nationalistic in tone and were likely considered a means of uniting the Welshmen at the camp. In contrast, the internees were keen to teach others about Wales and the Welsh language as part of a wider educational programme, describing themselves as the 'Celtic' section rather than just Welsh. The library's curated selection of books for the Ruhleben internees provides an insight into the library's perception of national identity during this period.

In essence, the thesis seeks to demonstrate how and why the NLW evolved during this period and in what ways the wider cultural and political shift in Wales influenced its development. The current work goes further than previous interpretations of the NLW's history which evaluated the library's success based largely on an assessment of its initial establishment and its administrative procedures. This thesis evaluates the library in broader terms by utilising new research on the subscribers' demographic characteristics and assessing on-site and remote readers. This broader approach interrogates the campaign's fundraising tactics and the library's buying policy to identify how Welsh national identity was utilised and enforced for a particular end, thus positioning the NLW within the wider context of Welsh national identity.

## **Chapter Two: The Campaign for the National Library of Wales c.1840-1905**

The establishment of a national library and museum for Wales was a key institutional development which occurred during a period in which Welsh identity was being increasingly asserted in both social and political contexts. This chapter builds upon the small body of literature that charts the development of the National Library of Wales (NLW) by offering a more critical analysis of the campaign to secure a national library, within the context of this cultural shift.

Jenkins' study presented a detailed summary of the early calls for a national library for Wales and the development of the campaign which eventually led to the library's establishment. Although Jenkins' work was mainly of a narrative nature he did make some reference to the wider social and political context from which the library emerged. He argued that the NLW was a product of a surge in national identity in Wales in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and its eventual success was the result of the imagination and hard work of a group of Welsh political leaders and the contributions of John Williams and many others, both large and small.<sup>1</sup>

However, although Jenkins connected the development of the NLW to a swell of national identity, he did little to define or interrogate Welsh national identity or to question the potential manipulation of it by political and cultural elites. In addition, he did not examine the possible long-term effect of the Blue Books Report of 1847 on nineteenth-century attitudes to the Welsh language and culture, in relation to the founding of the NLW. For the most part, Jenkins concentrated on the key personalities and relationships that shaped the campaign, but neglected to consider, in detail, their origins or former connections. Jenkins does outline the history of the *de facto* NLW housed by the University College of Wales (UCW) from 1873 and questions why the NLW, as a

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<sup>1</sup> David Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War: The National Library of Wales to 1952* (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 2002), pp.1-98, p.289.

separate institution, did not develop more quickly. However, he did little to explore the cause and effect of a surge of nationalistic sentiment towards the college following a fire in 1885, or analyse the significance of Principal Thomas Charles Edwards' patriotic fundraising trip to North America, which provided the college with a new general library in 1892. In relation to the forming of a Privy Council committee to decide where the national library and museum should be situated, Jenkins, as well as William Ll. Davies and Gildas Tibbott, were, it seems, unaware of private correspondence between British government officials, beside the committee's public statement.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Jenkins and others were unable to contextualise the development of the Welsh town campaigns within the government's own strategic framework.

In contrast, this chapter sheds light on the areas overlooked by Jenkins by situating the library campaign within the wider political, social and ideological environment, thus allowing for a more rounded analysis. Combining contemporary newspaper reports with more general studies of Wales' social and political history, this chapter examines why the concept for a NLW developed during the mid-nineteenth century. It explores the tension that developed between an anglicised and future-focused approach adopted by technocrats and the attempts to preserve Wales' literary past by cultural elites.

Using the UCW archive, this chapter presents a more nuanced study of the NLW whilst it was the property of the UCW, and investigates what influenced, and at some points hindered, its development. The work also examines what may have motivated key individuals to become involved with the campaign, focusing particularly on some of the group's exposure to nationalistic ideas at Oxford University, which may have impacted on their future decision-making.

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<sup>2</sup> William Ll. Davies, *The National Library of Wales: A Survey of Its History, Its Contents, and Its Activities* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1937); Gildas Tibbott, 'The National Library of Wales and its Charter', *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.5, No.2 (1947), pp.83-95.

Finally, this work demonstrates that the decisions made by the British Government impacted dramatically on how the local campaigns for the library and museum were conducted and the final outcome, which undermines the significance attributed to the Aberystwyth statement by Jenkins and Tibbott. Distinct from previous studies, this section examines primary source material that documents the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Board of Education's private discussions on the establishment, funding and location of the NLW. Largely, this chapter challenges Jenkins' uncritical presentation of the surge in Welsh national identity by analysing how national identity manifested itself in relation to the campaign and asking whether it was used as a divisive tool, particularly by political and cultural elites.

Part I of this chapter outlines the early appeals for a NLW and demonstrates that the relevant infrastructure to support such institutions was not in place until the late 1860s. Part II focuses on the NLW when it was part of the UCW in Aberystwyth and explores how changing attitudes towards the Welsh language as an academic subject shaped the library's development. Part III concentrates on the 1890s which was a key decade for the library campaign as it saw speeches in Parliament in support of museum grants for Wales and the establishment of an active Welsh library committee in Aberystwyth. Part IV evaluates the effect the Privy Council committee's demands had on the campaign's approach and questions the importance of the statements submitted for assessment.

### **I. Early Appeals for a National Library of Wales c.1840-1873**

In a meeting at the Mold Eisteddfod of 1873 it was decided that a national library for Wales would be established as part of the new college at Aberystwyth. This was the first time that a move had been made to establish a distinct NLW. There is evidence of attempts to set up a national archival repository for Wales, in some form, in both the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but these efforts were unsuccessful.<sup>3</sup> This section identifies the

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<sup>3</sup> In 1641 Richard Lloyd (1606-1676), an administrator in Denbigh, proposed that a repository for Wales' legal documentation should be established in the town of Ludlow, but his advice went unheeded. In 1773

early calls and plans for a national library for Wales before 1873 and explores what infrastructure was later required to support such an institution from the late 1860s.

There seems to be little evidence to suggest any major moves to establish a national library in the first half of the nineteenth century, except for a short discussion in a meeting of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (HSC) in 1843, reported in a newspaper.<sup>4</sup> At this point the majority of the society's books and manuscripts (MSS) were stored at the Freemason's Tavern in London, but it was reported they were keen to move them to a more accessible location. The British Museum was not a popular choice as it was deemed to cater only for the person who could pursue their studies full-time and not for 'the class which has to toil for its daily bread'. Therefore it was suggested that the HSC support the founding of 'a national library in the metropolis' funded by a subscription rate, an idea which was, apparently, already gaining currency.<sup>5</sup> The group had planned to approach the Welsh School in London to see they would provide an appropriate space, but this did not come to fruition. In fact, in 1844 the Governors of the Welsh School and the HSC presented a 'valuable collection of Welsh Mss' to the British Museum and in the same year the HSC was discontinued.<sup>6</sup>

The debate by the HSC demonstrates that in the 1840s there was a demand for access to Welsh MSS and, as will be seen in the 1890s, scholars were frustrated by the current arrangements where material was stored in various places across a large area and much was held in private libraries. There was an appetite for a distinct Welsh library, be

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the founder of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion Richard Morris (1703-1779) gave his large collection of books and manuscripts, collected by himself and his brother, to the Welsh school in London with the hope that other collectors would follow his example. The various calls for a NLW before the nineteenth century are expanded upon in David Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, pp.2-7.

<sup>4</sup> The *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* was an English language and Liberal-leaning newspaper. 'The Cymrodorion Society', *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1843, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> 'The Cymrodorion Society', *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> *Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in MDCCCXLI – MDCCCXLV* (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees, 1850), p.v; Peter R. Roberts, 'The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion' in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia*, Volume I, A-Celti (California: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp.527-529, p.528.



it based in London, even though there was a feasible option to store materials. However, it seems that even though the proposal for a NLW had support it came at a precarious time and was likely extinguished with the disbanding of the HSC.

In contrast to the 1890s, a time in which the NLW campaign began to flourish, during the 1840s Welsh groups and societies were sporadic and insecure, lacking the connectivity nurtured by the National Eisteddfod movement from 1860 and the higher education system in Wales, post-1872. At this time there was no precedent set in Wales for national institutions and campaigns did not have access to the influential political networks that were an intrinsic element of the successful campaign fifty years later, following the impact of the 1867 political reform act.

So, what type of framework was required to take the NLW from a concept to a reality? In the 1860s a Welsh festival of literature and music called an Eisteddfod was a forum where the establishment of Welsh institutions was debated, including the establishment of a national library. Before 1860 the Eisteddfod was provincial rather than national, but a call for an official constitution and set of rules led to the development of a National Eisteddfod in 1860.<sup>7</sup> The festival's transition from a local to a national event reinforced the idea of Wales as a nation, rather than as a series of interlinking provinces.

The first National Eisteddfod was held in Denbigh in 1860, at which an executive council was formed. Hywel Teifi Edwards asserted 'that 'the National' sprang from a concern to encourage a worthier interest in Welsh culture and in particular from a determination to promote the Welsh language and its literature.'<sup>8</sup> Edwards has argued that the Eisteddfod, certainly up to the mid-1830s, did little to create facilities where MSS and books could be accessed by scholars who were keen to study Welsh history and literature, however, from 1835, for almost the next twenty years, the Eisteddfod was supported by

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<sup>7</sup> Hywel Teifi Edwards, 'Eisteddfod' in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia*, Volume I, A-Celti (California: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp.664-665.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards, *The Eisteddfod*, p.20.

the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.<sup>9</sup> This society promoted the use of the Welsh language, which saw an increase in the development of more scholarly pursuits and interest from international Celtic scholars.

Following the Denbigh Eisteddfod an article was published in the newspaper *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* ('The Banner and Times of Wales') which drew attention to the lack of original historical research essays that had been entered at the Eisteddfod and returned to the issue of a lack of access for Welsh scholars to books and MSS. The article proposed that a petition be presented to Parliament for a grant to establish a national library between north and south.<sup>10</sup>

Jenkins argued that it was 'the first realistic blue-print for a national library of Wales' and it almost certainly seems to be the most detailed proposal up until 1860.<sup>11</sup> Jenkins argued that the article received a muted response, however in the following April a reformed constitution for the Eisteddfod drawn up by William Morris ('Gwilym Tawe') was submitted to several Welsh newspapers for public discussion.<sup>12</sup> In this constitution the final point stated '[t]hat it is highly desirable that a National Welsh Library should be a main feature of the property of the Eisteddfod.'<sup>13</sup> Considering the influential nature of *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* it is extremely likely that Morris and the other committee members would have been aware of this article on historical research, so the piece potentially had more impact than Jenkins initially suggested.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it is clear

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<sup>9</sup> Hywel Teifi Edwards, *The Eisteddfod* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990), p.16.

<sup>10</sup> 'Llyfrgell Genedlaethol i'r Cymru' ('National Library for the Welsh'), *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 29th August 1860, p.3. *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* was a weekly Welsh language newspaper and propagated Liberal and non-conformist views. The owner and editor Thomas Gee was a Calvinistic Methodist minister and publisher. Gee was an influential figure in the political, social and religious life of Wales during the latter half of the nineteenth century. For further detail see 'Thomas Gee (1815-1898)', Welsh Biography Online (WBO), accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.7.

<sup>13</sup> 'Eisteddfodau – Their Reform', *The Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts for South Wales*, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1861, p.4. The constitution was also published on the same day in *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, *Monmouthshire Merlin* and *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). Morgan described Thomas Gee as a 'celebrated publicist' (p.43) and *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* as an 'influential weekly' (p.50).

that the improvements in the Eisteddfod's infrastructure created a forum for the discussion and development of these types of 'national' projects.

Despite the *Baner* article and the inclusion of a NLW proposal in the Eisteddfod constitution there is no evidence to suggest that anything further was done to develop this proposal during the succeeding decade. Jenkins attributed the lack of response to the widely held view amongst non-conformists that receiving government grants for educational purposes could lead to an unwanted affiliation with the Anglican Church. Also, he argued that campaigners seeking to establish a higher education system in Wales during this period may have been loathed to jeopardise both projects by spreading the financial aid, raised via public subscriptions, too thinly.<sup>15</sup>

Although Jenkins' reasons are sound, the lack of progress could also be attributed to the curbing of the Welsh language at the Eisteddfod during the 1860s, in contrast to the constitution of 1860 which stated that '[t]heir object ought to be the maintenance of the Welsh language, literature...the preservation of its records.'<sup>16</sup> In response to the decline in the use of Welsh at the festival, in 1866 there was an attempt to set up an Eisteddfod y Cymry ('The Welsh People's Eisteddfod') to promote the language, but it proved, largely, unpopular.<sup>17</sup>

As a result, Welsh poetry, which had previously flourished in the Eisteddfod environment, became a casualty of the English-language Eisteddfod. Edwards argued that poets 'were not taken seriously as they were not expected to contribute much of value to the elevation of a small, bereft nation frantic with longing for a commendable place in the English imperial sun.'<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that it was not until 1950 that Welsh was finally

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<sup>15</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> 'Eisteddfodau – Their Reform', *The Merthyr Telegraph*, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> 'Eisteddfod y Cymry', *The Aberdare Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1866, p.3.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, *The Eisteddfod*, p.21.

made compulsory for all performances and used solely in council discussions at the Eisteddfod.<sup>19</sup>

This rejection of the language has to be considered within the context of the *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* or *The Report of the Blue Books* 1847: an investigation into the Welsh education system carried out by three English commissioners who relied on evidence given by the Anglicised clergy and gentry.<sup>20</sup> The report denigrated the Welsh language and recommended that English be the language of education. It also launched an attack on the moral standing of the Welsh people, becoming known in Wales as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* ('The Treachery of the Blue Books').<sup>21</sup> Prys Morgan argued that

[t]he action taken as a result of the brouhaha over the Blue Books was paradoxical and contradictory. On the one hand it made the Welsh more nationalistic and Anglophobe than they had ever been before, on the other it made the Welsh concerned to answer the criticisms of the commissioners by becoming more like the English, by turning themselves into hard-headed, business-like English-speaking Britons.<sup>22</sup>

It is against the backdrop of the Blue Books report that the Welsh language and culture initially suffered a decline, as parts of Welsh middle class society attempted to assimilate themselves into British culture. Latterly, however, the report stimulated a break from the Anglican Church, enabling non-conformity in Wales to connect with a reinvigorated

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<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Aull Davies, "'A oes heddwch?'" Contesting Meanings and Identities in the Welsh National Eisteddfod' in Felicia Hughes-Freeland (ed.), *Ritual, Performance, Media* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.143-162, p.154.

<sup>20</sup> *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales...In Three Parts, Part I, Carmarthen, Glamorgan and Pembroke, Part II, Brecknock, Cardigan, Radnor and Monmouth. Part III, North Wales* (London, 1847)

<sup>21</sup> For further reading on *The Report of the Blue Books* see Prys Morgan, 'From Long Knives to Blue Books' in R. R. Davies, Ralph A. Griffiths, Ieuan Gwynedd Jones and Kenneth O. Morgan (eds.), *Welsh Society and Nationhood: historical essays presented to Glanmor Williams* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), pp.199-215.

<sup>22</sup> Prys Morgan, 'The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.93.

concept of Welshness.<sup>23</sup> How then did the proposal for a Welsh national library survive a decline in interest in the Welsh language and culture?

Edwards argued that like the education system in Wales post-1847 ‘the National Eisteddfod from 1860s onwards would [also] play its part in projecting an image of a progressive people whose popular culture was no longer ‘a thing of the past’’.<sup>24</sup> In 1862 Hugh Owen (1804-1881) secured patronage for the Eisteddfod from Lord Penrhyn, a Scottish landowner and proprietor of the Penrhyn Quarry, on the condition that a more practical forum would be developed, as Penrhyn regarded the festival, in its present state, as a rather pointless and indulgent exercise. At this point Hugh Owen was already an influential educationalist and was the lead campaigner for the establishment of a university for Wales, which he achieved in 1872. Owen introduced a Social Science Section to the Eisteddfod in 1861 which developed a forum, conducted in English, to discuss Welsh issues such as educational reform and the creation of new Welsh institutions. A festival once steeped in the Welsh past was becoming an anglicised and future-focused forum, but importantly, one which was still keen to develop nation-building projects.

These Welsh non-conformist leaders of the 1850s and 1860s, such as Hugh Owen, were in contrast to those who emerged later during the 1880s and 1890s, as this later generation’s cultural nationalism was nurtured at universities such as Oxford, where Welsh societies were founded, and at the newer university colleges in Wales. John Davies argued that middle class non-conformist men of the 1860s had not generally gone to university and, instead, looked to English middle class non-conformists for guidance on cultural values. These English non-conformists propagated Utilitarianism which focused on the development of the British nation, which viewed something like the Welsh

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<sup>23</sup> David Hempton, ‘Evangelical enthusiasm and national identity in Scotland and Wales’ in David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland. From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.49-71, p.56.

<sup>24</sup> Edwards, *The Eisteddfod*, p.23.

language as a hindrance to progress.<sup>25</sup> Linda Colley, in her seminal work *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837*, contended that war with France ‘brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.’<sup>26</sup> She argued that ‘[p]atriotism in the sense of identification with Britain served...as a bandwagon on which different groups and interests leaped so as to steer in a direction that would benefit them’, which can be seen in the behaviour of Hugh Owen. This identification with Britishness by some Welsh elites challenges the idea that this identity was entirely forced upon the Welsh by a dominating, colonial neighbour whereas in reality it was ‘a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship.’<sup>27</sup>

Although men such as Hugh Owen were not advocates for the use of Welsh they were still patriots and wanted to redefine Wales based on an English model by establishing official national institutions such as universities, museums and libraries. However, although English became the predominant language of reform in Wales, propagated by these educational technocrats, Welsh was still the language of the masses. Welsh became, as Janet Davies argues, largely confined to the chapel, which solidified a connection between the Welsh language and non-conformity.<sup>28</sup> The Welsh-language press continued to grow despite the unfavourable verdict of the Blue Books: in 1866 it was claimed that the thirty-eight Welsh language periodicals had a total circulation of 120,000.<sup>29</sup> There was a demand for Welsh journals as the lower middle and working classes, who were the predominant consumers of these publications, were, in the main, monoglot speakers.<sup>30</sup> It was from these non-conformist chapels that the Welsh political

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<sup>25</sup> John Davies, *A History of Wales*, 1993 (London: Penguin, revised edition 2007), pp.407-408.

<sup>26</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.5.

<sup>27</sup> Colley, *Britons: forging the nation*, p.5.

<sup>28</sup> Janet Davies, *The Welsh Language: A History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p.73.

<sup>29</sup> In 1866, Henry Richard (Liberal MP for Merthyr Tydfil from 1868) claimed that 5 quarterlies, 25 monthlies and 8 weeklies published in Welsh had a total circulation of 120,000 cited in Davies, *History of Wales*, p.404.

<sup>30</sup> Davies, *The Welsh Language*, p.64, p.72.

leaders of the 1890s, who took up the mantle to create a NLW, were nurtured and educated.

One of the national projects that Hugh Owen was keen to develop was the establishment of a university for Wales. In 1863 a Welsh University Committee was formed to raise money to establish a University College in Aberystwyth, of which Hugh Owen was a prominent member. In 1867 the Castle Hotel on the seafront in Aberystwyth was purchased by this committee for £10,000 to house the college. The announcement, reported in the *Wrexham Advertiser*, stated that '[a]s well as having a convenient centre for scholastic operations, the Principality will be supplied with a more eligible home for a properly National Library, where all products of the mind of Wales, in past and future ages, may be garnered up, preserved and utilized.'<sup>31</sup> This feature was reiterated at a fund raising meeting in aid of the college in 1870 debunking the idea that the incorporation of the NLW into the university was a spontaneous suggestion by Hugh Owen in 1873, whereas it appears to be an integral part of the Aberystwyth College proposal.<sup>32</sup>

The formation of these institutions should be viewed against the backdrop of a political shift in Britain exemplified in the Second Reform Act of 1867, which roughly doubled the electorate in England and Wales to approximately two million voters. This act created 59,000 new voters in Wales and this increase had an impact on the 1868 general election results.<sup>33</sup> John Davies and Philip Jenkins argued that the election's impact must not be overstated as the Liberal party already had eighteen seats which increased to twenty-three in 1868.<sup>34</sup> However, as a result, several of the seats in Wales were now occupied by Welsh non-conformist Liberals who were supporters of new Welsh

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<sup>31</sup> The *Wrexham Advertiser* was a weekly English language newspaper with a Liberal viewpoint. 'University Education for Wales', *Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser and Cheshire Shropshire and North Wales*, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1867, p.7.

<sup>32</sup> Jenkins stated, in reference to the NLW being incorporated into the college, that 'Hugh Owen must have taken it upon himself to make such a gesture, for no College Committee was at hand to confirm it.' Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.12.

<sup>33</sup> Davies, *A History of Wales*, p.419.

<sup>34</sup> Davies, *A History of Wales*, p.419; Philip Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales 1536-1990* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.322.

educational institutions, including men such as Henry Richard (Merthyr Tydfil MP) and George Osbourne Morgan (Denbighshire MP). Philip Jenkins argued that '[t]he triumph of radical Liberalism in Wales began in 1868...was not fully accomplished for decades', this gradual shift gave Welsh cultural nationalism a political platform which began to bear fruit in the form of national institutions as the nineteenth century drew to a close.<sup>35</sup>

It was at this point that the development of the Eisteddfod into a discussion forum and the establishment of the College in Aberystwyth, for the first time, provided the infrastructure for the idea for a NLW to progress. The Social Science Forum established by Hugh Owen became the setting for a discussion about the founding of a national library at the Eisteddfod of 1873. The Rev. John Williams ('Glanmor') (1811-1891) poet, antiquary and curate of Ebbw Vale proposed that a steering committee be elected to work towards establishing a national library for Wales. An official meeting on the subject was hastily arranged and chaired by the Rev. T.R. Lloyd ('Estyn') (1820-1891) and the following key resolutions were passed:

that a National Library should be formed, consisting chiefly of rare books and manuscripts in the Welsh Language, and in other languages, where they relate to Wales or its people...that, the Committee of the University College of Wales having offered to set apart a room in the College building at Aberystwyth for the purposes of a National Library, and to make a suitable provision for its safe custody...that a provisional committee be appointed to adopt such preparatory measures as they may deem fitting, with the view of carrying out the object specified in the first resolution, and that such provisional committee report their proceedings at the Bangor Eisteddfod of 1874.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth and fifth resolutions listed the fifteen people who would make up the provisional committee and the two men who would act as the honorary secretaries:

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<sup>35</sup> Philip Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales*, pp.322-323.

<sup>36</sup> Unable to locate the transactions for this Eisteddfod at present but the meeting is reported and quoted in the press: 'National Library of Wales' *Aberystwyth Observer*, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1873, p.3; 'National Library of Wales' *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette*, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1873, p.5.



Benjamin T. Williams, Recorder of Carmarthen and Mr. Joseph Alun Jones from Temple, London.

It may seem perplexing that an institution primarily focused on preserving the Welsh language, culture and history emerged from an altogether anglicised and future-focused forum, but a national library was an institution that could be a key indicator of an emerging nation, in the same way as the university. Also Welsh linguistic and cultural nationalism still had its advocates, particularly those who were part of the Welsh non-conformist community, including members of this provisional committee, such as the editor and lexicographer Rev. Daniel Silvan Evans (1818-1903) and poet and commentator Rev. Robert Ellis ('Cynddelw') (1812-1875). Other members included Enoch Robert Gibbon Salisbury (1819-1890) who was a lawyer and bibliophile who collected books on Wales and the Marches. Rev. John Williams ('Glanmor') (1811-1891), writer of Welsh-language poetry and history, put forward the motion that a national library should be formed.

William Llewelyn Davies argued that 'this Committee was important, and continued to function for a period of over thirty years', however, Jenkins disagreed, and it seems that there is little evidence to suggest that the committee ever met.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the committee members are an example of the type of people who were interested in the development of a national library for Wales and represent the coupling of a newer technocratic approach with a loyal Welsh cultural allegiance.

Of the fifteen members of this provisional committee, seven of them lived in England and five of those were based in London. Even after the dissolution of the HSC in the 1840s, an appreciation of the Welsh language and culture had continued in the capital, typified by the founding of the London Cambrian Society in 1855. The Society was reported as 'promoting literary, musical and social discourse between the large

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<sup>37</sup> Davies, *The National Library of Wales*, p.2; Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.12.

number of Welshmen already resident in London...in their own language.’<sup>38</sup> The London Welsh, many of whom were successful professionals, championed Welsh cultural nationalism. Shawna Lichtenwalner describes the London Welsh as “myth-making” intellectuals; their work provided the Welsh with a means of sustaining their ethno-cultural identity despite the pressures of a changing world.’<sup>39</sup>

The HSC was resurrected following discussions also held at the Mold Eisteddfod in 1873, and the society provided a platform in London for the discussion of Welsh issues and the development of reform legislation, which were then aired at the yearly Eisteddfod forums. Four out of the five London Welshmen involved with the NLW committee were also involved with the new HSC committee: Hugh Owen; John Henry Puleston, a banker; Brinley Richards, director of the Royal Academy of Music and Stephen Evans a successful warehouseman. The involvement of these ambitious London-based Welshmen with these various societies and committees offered a long-term benefit for Wales. Many were politically active with useful contact networks coupled with a genuine interest in Welsh history and culture. As Emrys Jones concludes: ‘[t]hat these men retained their Welshness was to Wales’s everlasting benefit.’<sup>40</sup>

## **II. The National Library of Wales at the University College of Wales 1873-1890**

This section returns to the 1860s to explore in more detail the early history of the UCW and its relationship with the Welsh language in order to frame the establishment of a NLW at the college from 1873. The resolution for the UCW to provide a space for a NLW was officially accepted by the UCW’s court of governors in 1873. The governors assigned a hundred pounds a year for the development of a general college library, employed a

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<sup>38</sup> ‘London Cambrian Society’, *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1864, p.8.

<sup>39</sup> Shawna Lichtenwalner, *Claiming Cambria: Invoking the Welsh in the Romantic Era* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), p.17.

<sup>40</sup> Emrys Jones, ‘Victorian Heyday’ in Emrys Jones (ed.), *The Welsh in London 1500-1800* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp.110-126, p.116.

librarian and also invited donations of books.<sup>41</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the Welsh library was kept in a separate room, as requested in the resolution, and the later campaign committee, founded in 1896, were still asking for a specifically designated space twenty years later.<sup>42</sup> At this point, the college at Aberystwyth was only a year old and was struggling financially. When the college opened, over three-quarters of the purchase money for the building was still owed and it was only Hugh Owen's *ad-hoc* fundraising which staved off bankruptcy, as Aberystwyth received minimal financial assistance from the Treasury.<sup>43</sup>

David Emrys Evans observed that before the college was established the executive committee displayed 'a certain cautious disavowal not only of any nationalistic aims but of any purpose of fostering the native tongue and its literature'. The dissemination of English was more actively encouraged, which was consistent with the attitudes expressed at the Eisteddfod.<sup>44</sup> The secretary of the executive committee Dr Thomas Nicholas made no secret of the fact that he thought that the Welsh language could be a barrier to educational progress. In his paper 'Middle-class Education in Wales', which he read at a social science meeting in Birmingham in 1868, it was reported that he argued that

[t]he Welsh saw clearly by this time the absolute necessity to their children of a good knowledge of the English tongue, and, though they would not for the world confess it, they were deliberately prepared to abandon their ancient speech...[T]hey should no longer hear the complaint that the people of Wales cling to antiquated customs, and to a speech which, whatever its poetic and historical attractions, formed a barrier between them and the social and mental life of England.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Aberystwyth University Archives (AUA), GB GB0982 UWA-CRT, University College Wales (UCW) Reports to the Court of Governors, 1863-1891, 1872-73, pp.21-22.

<sup>42</sup> NLW Archive, MS17715C, Welsh Library Committee Minutes (WLCM), 1896-1906, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1896.

<sup>43</sup> D. Emrys Evans, *The University of Wales A Historical Sketch* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1953), p.18-19.

<sup>44</sup> Evans, *The University of Wales*, pp.14-15.

<sup>45</sup> 'Social Science Meetings, Birmingham', *Aberystwyth Observer* (Supplement), 10<sup>th</sup> October 1868, p.2.

At the gala opening of Aberystwyth College in 1872, reported in great detail in the newspaper the *Welshman*, there is much patriotic rhetoric, but little reference to the Welsh language.<sup>46</sup> George Osbourne Morgan MP, who had campaigned alongside Hugh Owen for a university, remarked that a higher education ‘should no longer be denied to those young men among our countrymen who from want of time or want of means, or of anything else, are debarred from the benefits of an English University education.’<sup>47</sup> Later the MP Henry Richard quoted a poem written by Daniel Ddu of Ceredigion which lists the ancient glories of Wales, but prefaced his recital with the pointed apology: ‘I am sure you will forgive me for reading in Welsh’.<sup>48</sup> The philosophy of the middle-class technocrats who came to the fore in the latter half of the 1860s was borne out during the early years of the college as the founders created an educational institution for Wales based on the English system, and not a university specially designed to propagate the Welsh language and culture.

For the first three years that the college was open there were no Welsh language courses on offer. David Jenkins attributed this gap in the curriculum to the London degree scheme to which Aberystwyth subscribed, as Welsh was not an accredited subject.<sup>49</sup> However, Dr Nicholas’ speech and other public speeches made in connection with the college suggest that these decisions were more an outcome of the committee’s ideological standpoint.<sup>50</sup> This approach had a detrimental effect on the progress of a NLW as a Welsh collection of books and MSS was not prioritised as the college library needed to be stocked with a reference section and modern English-language textbooks.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *The Welshman* was a weekly English language radical newspaper.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Opening of the University College for Wales’, *Welshman*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1872, p.6.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Opening of the University College for Wales’, *Welshman*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1872, p.7.

<sup>49</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.32

<sup>50</sup> Iwan Morgan, ‘Dr Thomas Nicholas and the U.C.W. Letters to Henry Richard M.P’ in Iwan Morgan (ed.), *The College by the Sea: a record and a review* (Aberystwyth: Students’ Representative Council in collaboration with the College Council, 1928), pp.257-269. According to Morgan, Thomas Nicholas resigned suddenly from the UCW committee in 1867. However, this was not connected to his views on the Welsh language, but in response to accusations that his output did not justify his salary.

<sup>51</sup> ‘The College Library’, *Aberystwyth Observer*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1875, p.4.

So, how did an institution which had no particular focus on the Welsh language and was cash poor manage to maintain a Welsh library? The college did request donations of books from the public (for all subject areas) and by May 1873 they had received two scarce Welsh bibles: Bishop Morgan's (1588) and Bishop Parry's (1620).<sup>52</sup> These donations, along with others, enabled a Welsh collection to begin to develop without investment. Also, although the college may not have initially set itself up as a preserver and champion of the Welsh language, by 1875 attitudes had begun to change.

Following a private court of governors meeting at the college in January 1875, a public meeting was held in the evening, with Hugh Owen as chair. After announcing that the college had at last received a complete set of title deeds and that the property was legally invested, several other members of the committee were asked to make short speeches, including the Inspector of Schools John Rhys. Rhys stressed that the college's aim was to educate scholars in modern science and technology, with a particular focus on agriculture and mining. However, he wanted to emphasise that 'Wales would of course, expect her sons to remember their country and their institutions' and 'the tongue of their dear mother country'. The college, he said, hoped to establish a Chair in Celtic Philology and that '[t]hey wanted not merely a college but a library connected with it. They wanted to preserve the books that had been written on Welsh, and that bore on the Welsh.'<sup>53</sup> This alternative attitude could only aid the development of the Welsh library.

Cardiganshire born John Rhys, while studying at Oxford, had spent his summer vacations visiting France and Germany where he had heard philologists such as Georg Curtius and August Leskien lecture, which sparked Rhys' interest in philology and linguistics. A year before he spoke at the public meeting he had delivered a series of lectures at Aberystwyth on Welsh philology and was establishing a reputation as a Celtic scholar, after placing articles in the French journal *Revue Celtique*, founded in 1870,

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<sup>52</sup> 'University College of Wales', *The Welshman*, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1873, p.2.

<sup>53</sup> 'University College of Wales', *The Welshman*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1875, p.5.

which was the first journal wholly dedicated to Celtic studies. Daniel R. Davis argues that Rhys aimed ‘to bring the method of comparative philology to bear on the Welsh language for a Welsh-speaking academic audience, and second, to make this exercise more widely available to those in the English-speaking world.’<sup>54</sup> Rhys was evidently aware of the burgeoning discipline of Celtic studies and could see clearly how the first university in Wales could benefit from developing the academic study of Welsh, while still teaching subjects such as science and technology which Hugh Owen connected to a forward looking Wales. As Rhys argued, the academic study of Welsh required Welsh texts, so his suggestion likely had an effect on the college’s efforts to build a nucleus collection for a NLW.

Graham Day and Richard Suggett have also identified an ambivalence to the Welsh language amongst these middle-class and Liberal non-conformists of the 1860s who were involved in establishing the higher education system in Wales and an enthusiasm for the use of English in an educational context. However, Day and Suggett argue that ‘a striking aversion of these ideas took place: the achievement [the establishment of the UCW] is reinterpreted as an expression of the innate qualities of Welsh.’<sup>55</sup> As a result, Welsh was quickly incorporated into the curriculum and acknowledged as an academic subject.

Rhys’ influence can be seen in the college’s actions in May 1875 as it was reported in the *Cambrian News* that a committee was being formed in Wrexham in order to collect subscriptions for the college, but also to help ‘towards forming a national library in connection with the College, by placing collections in various places...where people

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<sup>54</sup> Daniel R. Davis, ‘Introduction’ in Daniel R. Davis (Selected and Introduced), *The Development of Celtic Linguistics 1850-1900. Volume 1 Grammatica Celtica* by Johann Kasper Rees (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.vii-xxxiii, p.xvii

<sup>55</sup> Graham Day and Richard Suggett, ‘Conceptions of Wales and Welshness: Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Wales’ in G. Rees, J. Bujra, P. Littlewood, H. Newby and T.L. Rees (eds.), *Political Action and Social Identity Class, Locality and Ideology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.91-115, p.111.

might send books.’<sup>56</sup> By March 1878 lists of book which had been donated to the college were published in various local newspapers which reveals the wide geographical spread of donations. For example, a copy of *Cofiant Caledfryn* (biography of the congregational minister and poet William Williams) was presented by Rev. Samuel Roberts from Conwy, the works of the Rev. Walter Thomas (‘Gwallter Mechain’) presented by Miss Davies from Penmaen Dovey in Montgomeryshire, and *Pregethau y Parch. John Evans, Merthyr* (Sermons of the Rev. John Evans) presented by J. Simpson Evans from Merthyr in south Wales.<sup>57</sup> In the wake of Rhys’ suggestion, in June 1875 the college council decided to appoint a professor of Welsh and by the end of July the translator and lexicographer Can. Daniel Silvan Evans was appointed, who had been a member of the provisional committee to found a NLW established at the 1873 Eisteddfod.<sup>58</sup>

Despite this change in attitude to the Welsh language the UCW was perpetually short of money because of the absence of a government grant, so the purchasing of books was limited and the expansion of the library impeded. Contemporary newspaper reports attest to this lack of available funds, the impact of which can be seen in December 1879 with the sale of the late Rev. Robert Jones’ Welsh library, conducted by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge. The library of over two thousand items included Gruffydd Roberts’ *Welsh Grammar* issued from the Milan Press in 1567 and Caradoc of Lancarvan’s *Historie of Cambria*, 1584, and was described by the *Cardiff Times* as being ‘the most complete and extensive collection of Welsh literature ever likely to be brought under the hammer.’ The article insisted that the complete library should be bought by ‘the University College of Wales, or some other national institution, there to form the nucleus

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<sup>56</sup> *The Cambrian News* was a weekly Liberal-leaning newspaper published mainly in English. ‘University College of Wales’, *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1875, p.7.

<sup>57</sup> ‘University College of Wales’ *Aberystwyth Observer*, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1878, p.5. Another example of these listings features in ‘Local and District News’ *North Wales Express*, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1879, p.4.

<sup>58</sup> AUA, GB GB0982 UWA-CAC-1-1, UCW Court and Council Minute Book 1874-1889, 1875, p.27, p.41.

of a Welsh national library.<sup>59</sup> However, by the end of December it was reported that Swansea Library had purchased the entire collection for over £500, which they funded using their penny rate.<sup>60</sup> It is evident from Aberystwyth college's financial records that unless an outside donor could have been found they would not have been able to bid for the Rev. Robert Jones' library, as the annual expenditure for the library, museum and laboratories only amounted to just over £120.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the financial difficulties suffered by the college had a direct impact on the development of a national library at Aberystwyth and severely curbed the ambitious plans laid down in 1873.

In the summer of 1885 the financial situation was made more precarious as the college was devastated by fire which resulted in the death of three people and destroyed a large section of the building. *The North Wales Express* reported that '[i]t was apparent that the northern wing, by far the largest portion of the building, was doomed...[but] the attention of the crowd had already been turned to saving the valuable books in the library'. It was therefore due to the efforts of students and staff on the night of the fire that the library was saved.<sup>62</sup> The fire alerted the palaeographer John Gwenogvryn Evans, who was about to embark on a series of diplomatic editions of medieval Welsh texts, to the fact that Welsh MSS across Wales were extremely vulnerable and needed to be stored in adequate strong rooms. Evans became a key figure in the later campaign to secure the NLW for Aberystwyth and it seems that the fire was a key moment that prompted him to become more involved in protecting MSS in Wales for future use.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *The Cardiff Times* was a weekly English language and Liberal-leaning newspaper. 'A National Welsh Library' *Cardiff Times*, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1879, p.5.

<sup>60</sup> 'The Rotherhithe Welsh Books', *Weekly Mail*, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1879, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> AUA, GB GB0982 UWA-CRT-2-1, UCW Reports to the Court of Governors, 1863-1891, 1879-80, Breakdown of expenditure: library £54 19s 8d; museum and laboratory £66 1s 0d.

<sup>62</sup> *The North Wales Express* was a weekly English language and Tory-leaning newspaper. 'The Destruction of the Aberystwyth College', *The North Wales Express*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1885, p.7; UCW Reports to the Court of Governors 1863-1891, 1884-5, p.13.

<sup>63</sup> David Jenkins, 'A National Library for Wales: The Prologue', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1982), pp.139-152, p.144.



The fire placed the college, already lurching from one financial crisis to another, in a precarious position. Even before the fire Aberystwyth's status as one of Wales' national universities had been called into question, following a report published in 1881 by a government departmental committee chaired by Lord Aberdare. The committee had been appointed to assess the state of intermediate and higher education in Wales and concluded that Wales should have two universities – one in the north and one in the south – and that these institutions should each receive a £4,000 annual grant. The committee recommended that the southern university be built in Glamorganshire and the northern university remain at Aberystwyth, or move to Caernarvon or Bangor, as Aberystwyth was deemed by the committee to only be accessible to the residents of Cardiganshire. Evans has described the committee report as 'the educational charter of modern Wales', so the questioning of Aberystwyth's status as a national university presented the college with an uncertain future.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the demise of the College would have, again, left the NLW without a home.

In line with the committee's recommendations, Aberystwyth was granted £4,000 in 1882, but this money was transferred to Bangor College following its founding in 1884. Cardiff College also received £4,000 when it was established in 1883, highlighting further the perception of Aberystwyth as a local college rather than a national institution. Supporters of Aberystwyth College continued to lobby the government for a grant of £4,000 in line with the other universities, but the departmental committee would only permit the college to receive £2,500 for five years, with the condition that an additional £1,000 per year be raised in private subscriptions.<sup>65</sup> In April 1885 A.J. Mundella, vice-president of the Aberdare Committee, reiterated that Aberystwyth was required to make more progress before an increase of the grant would be considered.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Evans, *The University of Wales*, p.32.

<sup>65</sup> Ellis, *The University College of Wales*, p.82.

<sup>66</sup> Ellis, *The University College of Wales*, p.86.

The fire of 1885 can be seen as a turning point as it could have marked the end of the college, but instead triggered an unexpected wave of support. The *North Wales Express* reported that the fire ‘has brought about an excited and earnest zeal for its welfare and its rights that, perhaps, could have no other way have been aroused...another college should be erected, and this time on the same footing as Bangor and Cardiff.’<sup>67</sup> Several newspapers, including the weekly Welsh language newspaper *Y Drych* (‘The Mirror’) that was circulated amongst the Welsh speakers of the United States, printed Principal Edwards’ letter to the Mayor of Aberystwyth which contained the patriotic lines: ‘[t]he college has at length had its baptism of fire. It will arise from its ashes with a new life. Wales will never now let it die.’<sup>68</sup>

In August 1885 – a month after the college fire – the government agreed to increase Aberystwyth’s grant to £4,000, in line with Bangor and Cardiff. By this point a Tory government was in power, and Edward Stanhope was dealing with the grant issue rather than Mundella. Letters between Stanhope and the Liberal MP Stuart Rendel – a supporter of the College and later its president – reveal that after the fire Stanhope encouraged Rendel to send a memorial to the education office asking for an increase in Aberystwyth’s grant, rather than submitting a deputation to Parliament. Stanhope stated that it ‘appears that this request is strongly supported by every Welsh Member of Parliament, and by men of both political parties. Lord Aberdare joins with Lord Emlyn MP, and all the surviving members of the recent Welsh Education Committee.’<sup>69</sup>

Stanhope also indicated his awareness of the ‘opinion of the Principality’ and that he hoped that the increase in the grant ‘may have the effect of stimulating and encouraging local efforts.’<sup>70</sup> The sudden surge of support following the fire had swiftly raised

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<sup>67</sup> ‘The Aberystwyth College Movement’, *North Wales Express*, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1885, p.5.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Y Trychineb yn Aberystwyth’, *Drych*, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1885, p.8; ‘The Fire at Aberystwith College’, *Cardiff Times*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1885, p.2; ‘The Destruction of the College by Fire’, *Aberystwyth Observer*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1885, p.5.

<sup>69</sup> NLW, GB 0210 RENDEL, Lord Rendel Papers, Letters to Stuart Rendel 1885-1886, Letter 984, Letter from Edward Stanhope to Lord Rendel, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1885.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from Edward Stanhope to Lord Rendel, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1885.

Aberystwyth's profile and emphasised its role in the history of Welsh higher education, 'firmly impressing itself on the social and national consciousness of the Welsh people in a manner unique to the educational world.'<sup>71</sup> By the end of 1885, although having been ravaged by fire, the UCW emerged financially more stable with its Welsh library intact and identifying as a *Welsh* national institution.

More fundraising was still required so the principal of the college Thomas Charles Edwards and others took the opportunity to campaign for the college and committees were set up to collect subscriptions from across Great Britain to support the rebuilding programme.<sup>72</sup> The college's status as a pioneering institution was emphasised and the support garnered from working people was highlighted. It was also made clear at public meetings that 'the college was not working solely in the cause of Nonconformity' and that it welcomed students from all backgrounds.<sup>73</sup> In 1887, at North Wales Wesleyan meeting, Edwards, in a bid to secure donations, argued that the Colleges brought denominations together and that he hoped that 'sectarian bitterness and jealousy were rapidly passing away.'<sup>74</sup>

Before 1885 Aberystwyth College, to a point, had languished in obscurity overtaken by the colleges of Cardiff and Bangor who were legitimatised by the full government grant. Aberystwyth College's location was relatively isolated and its perceived allegiances to non-conformity may have been alienating to some. The fire catapulted Aberystwyth College into the public eye and it came, with the aid of mid and north Wales' press, to symbolise the Welsh nation also struggling to assert itself. Words

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<sup>71</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p.107.

<sup>72</sup> 'Aberystwyth College Restoration Fund', *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1885 (Visitor Supplement), p.4; 'Welsh Note from Manchester', *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1887, p.3; University College Wales. Influential Meeting at Towyn', *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1888, p.3.

<sup>73</sup> University College Wales. Influential Meeting at Towyn', p.3.

<sup>74</sup> 'North Wales Wesleyan District Meeting', *Llangollen Advertiser Denbighshire Merionethshire and North Wales Journal*, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1887, p.3.

of support and financial donations came from the developing Welsh Liberal movement, with David Davies MP pledging to give 20% of whatever amount the country raised.<sup>75</sup>

The positive impact of the fire was evident at the time with Ven. Archdeacon Griffiths declaring only three weeks after: '[i]t is wonderful what the fire has done. It has destroyed the College – that gives us much grief – but it has also destroyed what had given me much gratification – a large amount of rhagfarn (prejudice) that existed in the minds of many against the College.'<sup>76</sup> This outpouring of support ultimately benefitted the library which would, following renovations, be housed in a purpose built space with the protection of important Welsh MSS now firmly on the agenda, under the watchful eye of the likes of John Gwenogvryn Evans.

Despite the increase in the Treasury grant and a fundraising campaign, running the college alongside the renovation was challenging, which impacted on the items that could be bought for the library. In 1886 the vast library of the MP Enoch Robert Gibbon Salisbury, which included approximately 13,000 books in Welsh or relating to Wales, was offered at auction. Although the college appointed a committee to consider purchasing the collection the money was not available, so, instead, it was purchased by Cardiff College under the guidance of Thomas Powell, the Professor of Celtic Studies.<sup>77</sup> Salisbury's library became the university's most important collection, and much was made of it when the towns of Aberystwyth and Cardiff competed for the national library in 1905.

The renovation of the college did result in the development of purpose built areas, including those for the museum and the library, which, altogether, cost £3,300.<sup>78</sup> These

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<sup>75</sup> 'Restoration of the College Public Meeting', *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1885 (Visitor Supplement), p.8.

<sup>76</sup> 'Restoration of the College Public Meeting', p.8.

<sup>77</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.13; Cardiff University Information Services, 'Salisbury Rare Books Collection (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> C.)', <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/libraries/scolar/special/salisbooks.html>, accessed 28th April 2015.

<sup>78</sup> UCW Reports to the Court of Governors, 1885-6, p.34. The museum cost £1,800 and the library cost £1,500.

costings only included the construction of the library and not its fixtures and fittings, so during the summer of 1890 the college principal, Thomas Charles Edwards, embarked on a tour of America and Canada to collect donations. Edwards had been ruminating on this trip since early 1888 after being contacted by friends in America who thought that a fundraising trip would bear fruit.<sup>79</sup> Edwards' explanation for focusing his campaign on the library was because he thought 'that it would be better to consolidate our wants in a concrete form' and, in his view, the library seemed 'to be the most pressing need'. The cost of the library's fixtures was estimated to be £1,000 (\$5,000) which was an achievable financial target.<sup>80</sup> The library was also a space where an inscription could be placed on public display to commemorate those who had given so generously. Edwards explicitly told the American and Canadian donors about this planned inscription, which would read: 'Dodrefnwyd y Llyfrgell hon gan Gymry cenedlgarol yn yr Unol Daleithau ac yn Canada 1890. Cas gwr na charo y wlad a'I maco' (This library was furnished by the patriotic Welshmen of the United States and Canada, 1890. Hateful the man who loves not the country that nurtured him.)<sup>81</sup>

The breadth of Edwards' tour is evident from the college's report on the American contributions which reveals donors located across America, from New York to California.<sup>82</sup> The cities with the highest amount of donations were New York and Pittsburgh; here Welshmen contributed almost half of the money that Edwards hoped to raise.<sup>83</sup> Although the funds raised by Edwards were only for the fixtures and fittings it

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<sup>79</sup> AUA, GB GB0982 UWA-PRI, Unsorted correspondence and papers of various principals of the UCW, 1868-ongoing, Principal Thomas Charles Edwards letters, Letter to Mr Rogers from Edwards, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1888.

<sup>80</sup> UCW Reports to the Court of Governors, 1890-1, p.17; 'Principal Edwards in America' *Cardiff Times*, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1890, p.1.

<sup>81</sup> UCW Reports to the Court of Governors, 1890-1, pp.17-18.

<sup>82</sup> AUA, GB GB0982 UWA-DEP-1-1-D-1-1, Report of Contributions by Welshmen towards furnishing the new library, 1890-1892.

<sup>83</sup> Report of Contributions by Welshmen, 1890-1892. T.C. Edwards aimed to raise \$5000 (£1000): New York contributed \$1965 and Pittsburgh \$410.

sparked an interest in the books that would later fill the library. Edwards reported to the college governors that

[a] suggestion was made to me...that, as soon as the work of furnishing the Library with adequate fittings is completed, we should start a fund, the interest of which will be placed every year at the disposal of the Senate for the purchase of such expensive books as they may consider necessary in what we hope will in time be one of the best libraries in Wales.<sup>84</sup>

Edwards' reputation as a Welsh non-conformist minister preceded him, and he spent much of his trip visiting non-conformist chapels to preach (in both Welsh and English); money would then be collected for the library fund from the congregation.<sup>85</sup> In January 1891 the Welsh-American magazine *The Cambrian* published an article on Edwards (including a portrait) charting his various achievements at the college and as a minister. His trip to America is summarised in the closing paragraph: '[h]is vigorous thinking, powerful delivery and the fervency of his spirit made a deep impression on his hearers generally, and his preaching proved to many a "season of refreshing," and their [Edwards and his wife] visit to America will be cherished by many as one of their most pleasant recollections.'<sup>86</sup> The experience of attending sermons delivered by this eminent preacher from Wales likely provoked a sense of connectivity both to past chapel experiences (possibly back in Wales before emigration) and a yearning for the traditions of the homeland.<sup>87</sup> For Edwards, his ability to trigger these emotions had the potential to increase the donations for the college library.

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<sup>84</sup> UCW Reports to the Court of Governors, 1890-1, p.18

<sup>85</sup> Rev. E.C. Evans, 'Editorial Notes and Comments. Honouring Dr. Edwards', *The Cambrian*, Vol.10, No.10 (1890), p.315. *The Cambrian* was a national monthly magazine, devoted to the interests of the Welsh-American people (1880-1919). It has been digitised by the Wales-Ohio project and can be found at <http://ohiocambrian.llgc.org.uk/index.html?lng=en>, accessed 20th April 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Between 1880 and 1919 *The Cambrian* was one of the most popular magazines read by Welsh Americans. 'Rev. Thomas Charles Edwards, D.D.', *The Cambrian*, Vol.11, No.1 (1891), p.3.

<sup>87</sup> There is a specific word, *hiraeth*, in Welsh to describe a yearning or longing for the homeland which does not directly translate into English.

Following Edwards' return to Aberystwyth his trip is reported in the November minutes of the court and council: the 'principal has been to American and many have generously given to the Welsh Library fund.'<sup>88</sup> This is one of the first instances in the college's minutes and reports that the library is described as 'the Welsh Library'. It may be that the use of the library as a marketing tool to extract donations from the Welsh diaspora had created a stronger connection – in the minds of the committee at least – between the library and a concept of 'Welshness'. There is no evidence to confirm that Edwards used the term 'Welsh library' whilst on the tour, as unfortunately there are no transcriptions of the speeches he gave, and reports of the tour by the Welsh-American newspapers refer only to a funding campaign for a college library.<sup>89</sup> However, the emotive language included in the inscription reveals the patriotic nature of the campaign and the emphasis placed on a Welsh-American sense of national identity.

In short, the concept of a NLW was coming to represent what Godfrey Burston described as a 'cultural' national library: a potential indicator of a disconnection between political unification and cultural identity, in the words of John Osmond, an 'anti-British institution'.<sup>90</sup> The NLW is an example of a 'second wave' national library which increasingly began to represent a threat to the overarching national context of the British state. However, like the university, those campaigning for a NLW would need to garner financial support from the British state, which created a conflicting dynamic.

### III. The 1890s

By the early 1890s the NLW at the college, in physical terms, had not advanced dramatically since its foundation in 1873. Stock had increased sporadically, but this

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<sup>88</sup> AUA, GB GB0982 UWA-CAC-1-3, UCW Court and Council Minutes Book, 1889-1900, p.33.

<sup>89</sup> See 'The Welsh in America', *The Cambrian*, Vol.10, No.6 (1890), pp.190-191; 'Pwyllgor Llyfrgell Coleg Aberystwyth' [Trans: College Library Aberystwyth Committee], *Drych*, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1890, p.5.

<sup>90</sup> Godfrey Burston, 'National Libraries: An Analysis' reprinted from *International Library Review*, Vol.5, No.2 (1973), pp.183-194 in Maurice B. Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, Vol.1 (London: Aslib, 1979), pp.87-98, p.89; Prys Morgan, 'The Creation of the National Museum and National Library' in J. Osmond (ed.), *Myths, Memories and Futures: The National Library and National Museum in the Story of Wales* (Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2007), pp.13-21, p.20.

growth was due principally to donations from the public rather than a coordinated buying policy. However, awareness of the existence of private and public Welsh collections across Wales had increased in tandem with the development of the academic study of Welsh, and a central Welsh repository of documents became more relevant. As a result, calls for a NLW intensified during the 1890s with the aid of a parliamentary campaign spearheaded by the Welsh Liberal movement and the coming together of key Welsh cultural elites to form a coordinated campaign group. This section charts the significant stages of this campaign whilst offering a critical analysis of the motivations of the main individuals and groups involved, and positioning the events in the wider social and political environment.

John Herbert Lewis entered Parliament in 1892 as a Liberal MP representing the Flint boroughs. He was involved in local politics from 1886 and helped to implement the Welsh Intermediate Education Act in 1889. During the 1890s Lewis persistently campaigned to secure a museum grant for Wales, equivalent to those received by Scotland and Ireland. In 1894 Lewis made a speech in Parliament which highlighted the disparity between Scotland and Ireland's museum and library provisions with that of Wales. In the same way as Scotland and Ireland, Wales had its own separately funded higher education system so, Lewis asked, why could it not have a government funded library and museum?<sup>91</sup> The matter was sidestepped by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the MP George Bartley of Islington North suggested that Wales was amply served by the British Museum.<sup>92</sup>

A year later Lewis tried again, this time emphasising the lack of a central repository where MSS could be collected. John Gorst, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, responded with sympathy, but, he stated, '[u]ntil a chief city was found for

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<sup>91</sup> Historic Hansard Online (HHO), HC Deb, 'Civil Services and Revenue Department Estimates', Vol.29, cc.92-96, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1894.

<sup>92</sup> HHO, HC Deb, 'Civil Services and Revenue Department Estimates', Vol.29, cc.95-97, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1894.



Wales, it would be very difficult for the government, even if they were willing to place a national museum in Wales.’<sup>93</sup> David Lloyd George replied to Gorst and stated that the joint committee of the Welsh County Councils would nominate a capital city for Wales and remove this obstacle.<sup>94</sup> Gorst’s comment was more than likely an attempt to kick the proposal into the long grass, but it had a profound effect on the campaign, resulting in the establishment of a museum and library being intrinsically linked to the nomination of a capital city for Wales.

Lewis petitioned the government again in 1896 and in 1898 with the support of other Welsh MPs, but with no success.<sup>95</sup> John Gorst continued to emphasise that Wales was served by the British Museum which was situated in Wales’s capital London and therefore it did not need its own museum grant. Lewis pointed out that the higher education grants for Wales had been awarded without a recognised capital, but this shrewd observation fell on deaf ears.<sup>96</sup> The crux of the matter was that the British government did not want to recognise Wales as a separate nation but as a subsidiary of England. Wales did not want a provincial museum and library but *national* institutions, as Wynford Philipps MP for Pembrokeshire argued ‘[w]e want to have a museum in Wales that will do for Wales what the British Museum does for England.’<sup>97</sup>

In October 1896 the first meeting was held of the Welsh library committee at UCW chaired by the MP for Merioneth Thomas Edward Ellis (1859-1899). This meeting was a significant turning point as it marked the formation of an official committee which would campaign to create a purpose-built institution. There were few MPs on the committee, but this may have been because the men wanted to operate as a lobbying group

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<sup>93</sup> HHO, HC Deb, ‘Civil Services and Revenue Department Estimates’, Vol.36, cc.1044-1049, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1895.

<sup>94</sup> HHO, HC Deb, ‘Civil Services and Revenue Department Estimates’, Vol.36, cc.1049-1050, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1895.

<sup>95</sup> HHO, HC Deb, ‘Museum Grant for Wales’, Vol.37, cc.836-853, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1896; ‘Museum Grants for Wales’, Vol.54, cc.1052-1059, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1898.

<sup>96</sup> HHO, HC Deb, ‘Museum Grants for Wales’, Vol.54, cc.1053, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1898.

<sup>97</sup> HHO, HC Deb, ‘Museum Grants for Wales’, Vol.54, cc.1056-1059, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1898.

rather than a political committee, so John Herbert Lewis was not a member. Many of the men involved in this first meeting and others who were subsequently invited to join the committee went on to influence how the campaign operated and shaped a vision for a NLW. However, the relationships between these committee members were not forged in 1896 but had been developing, in some cases, over two decades. Therefore, how had their past experiences and actions led them to join such a committee?

In 1875 Thomas Ellis entered the UCW as a student and after graduating enrolled at Oxford in 1880. At Oxford Thomas Ellis, along with other students who had attended Aberystwyth, formed a society called Aberystwyth College Club which enabled students to maintain their Aberystwyth connections and also promote Welsh culture. The society disbanded in 1883 but Kenneth O. Morgan described it as a precursor to the more nationalistic Cymdeithas Dafydd ap Gwilym ('Dafydd ap Gwilym Society') founded in 1886 at Oxford.<sup>98</sup> The Dafydd ap Gwilym society's president was the Celtic scholar John Rhys and the group focused on the reforming of the Welsh language's orthography. Morgan described them as an apolitical society populated by 'a cultural elite' who went on 'to spread the gospel of cultural awakening' back in Wales.<sup>99</sup>

The Cymru Fydd movement ('Young Wales') was a political manifestation of the cultural nationalism propagated by the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society, and had a similar membership. It was founded, like many of the Welsh cultural movements of this period, in London in 1886, with a later branch developing in Liverpool. As a movement, it was populated by political and cultural elites who were often based outside of Wales and the movement made little progress in Wales until the early 1890s.<sup>100</sup>

Thomas Ellis, also a member of Cymru Fydd, was inspired by Irish nationalism and the call for Irish independence. In 1886 he was the first MP to include self-

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<sup>98</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), p.51.

<sup>99</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, pp.100-101.

<sup>100</sup> Morgan, *Wales in British Politics*, pp.104-5.

government for Wales in his manifesto and in a speech to the Merionethshire Liberal Association in 1890 he called for a legislative assembly for Wales.<sup>101</sup> It was reported that in this speech Ellis emphasised that the new invigorated Wales also wanted ‘a university and a national museum of science and art and a national library of books, manuscripts and records’.<sup>102</sup> Under the guidance of Ellis, Cymru Fydd aligned cultural and literary nationalism with political aspirations for home rule. The politicisation of institutions such as the national university, museum and library by Cymru Fydd and the Welsh Liberals, prioritised the establishment of these institutions and placed them on the political agenda.

However, the campaign for home rule ultimately resulted in the downfall of Cymru Fydd in 1896. In the early 1890s Cymru Fydd branches had flourished in Wales so, as a result, there was a move to unite them under a national league. This league would then join with the Liberal Federations of the north and south, with the North Liberal Federation formally joining in 1895. But there were already rifts between the north and south which came to a head in 1896 with the south refusing to join forces, as home rule was not seen as being in their mercantile interests. This debacle revealed the fractured nature of Wales as a nation and, as a result, the Welsh Liberals quickly dropped the home rule policy rendering Cymru Fydd obsolete.<sup>103</sup>

Even before 1896 Thomas Ellis had begun to distance himself from the movement as he realised that a break from the Liberal party would result in a lack of political influence for Wales and he did not believe in purely political nationalism. He had already helped to secure the Royal Charter for the University of Wales in 1892 and now turned his attention to the establishment of a NLW in his beloved Aberystwyth.

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<sup>101</sup> Davies, *History of Wales*, p.441; The *South Wales Daily* was an English language and Liberal-leaning newspaper. ‘Speech by Mr Ellis’, *South Wales Daily News*, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1890, p.7.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Speech by Mr Ellis’, p.7.

<sup>103</sup> J. Graham Jones, ‘Lloyd George, Cymru Fydd and the Newport meeting of January 1896’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.29, No.4 (1996), pp.435-453.

<b>MEMBERS OF THE WELSH LIBRARY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DOB</b>	<b>PROFESSION</b>	<b>ATTENDED OR WORKED FOR ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>ATTENDED OR WORKED FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>MEMBER OF DAFYDD AP GWILYM SOCIETY</b>	<b>MEMBER OF CYMRU FYDD</b>
<b>GROUP ONE</b>						
DANIEL SILVAN EVANS	1818	LEXICOGRAPHER	YES	NO	NO	?
THOMAS LEVI	1825	MINISTER & AUTHOR	NO	NO	NO	YES
DAVID H DAVIES	1829	CLERGYMAN	?	?	NO	?
RICHARD WILLIAMS	1835	ANTIQUARY & LAWYER	NO	NO	NO	?
THOMAS CHARLES EDWARDS	1837	MINISTER & FIRST UCW PRINCIPAL	YES	YES	NO	?
JOHN WILLIAMS	1840	PHYSICIAN	NO	NO	NO	?
WILLIAM ROBERT MORRIS WYNNE	1840	CONSERVATIVE MP & LANDOWNER	NO	NO	NO	NO
LLEWELYN EDWARDS	1844	MINISTER	NO	YES	NO	?
HENRY OWEN	1844	ANTIQUARY	NO	YES	NO	?

<b>GROUP TWO</b>									
JOHN GWENOGVRYN EVANS	1852	PALAEOPHIL	NO	NO (BUT LIVED THERE FROM 1880)	YES	?			
OWEN MORGAN EDWARDS	1858	EDUCATIONALIST & AUTHOR	YES	YES	YES	YES			
THOMAS EDWARD ELLIS (CHAIR)	1859	MP	YES	YES	YES	YES			
THOMAS FRANCIS ROBERTS	1861	PRINCIPAL OF UCW	YES	YES	YES	?			
DANIEL LLEUFER THOMAS	1863	MAGISTRATE	NO	YES	YES	YES			
EDWARD ANWYL	1866	CELTIC SCHOLAR	YES	YES	YES	YES			
JOHN HUMPHREYS DAVIES	1872	BIBLIOGRAPHY	YES	YES	YES	?			

**Table 2.1: The first eighteen members of the Welsh library committee, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1896.**

**Source:** Information for this table was taken from a variety of sources. Welsh Biography Online; Welsh Newspapers Online; NLW Archive, GB 0210 TIELLIS, Thomas Iorwerth Ellis Papers, File C30, A booklet containing a list of members of Cymdeithas/Society Dafydd ap Gwilym Rhydychen/Oxford, 1886-1924, p.5; Dewi Rowland Hughes, *Cymru Fydd*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).

As can be seen in Table 2.1, the first members of the Welsh Library committee can be divided into two distinct groups. The first group include men who were born from 1818-1844: Llewelyn Edwards, Thomas Levi, David H. Davies, Thomas Charles Edwards, Daniel Silvan Evans, Emrys Jones, Henry Owen, John Williams, Richard Williams and William Wynne. Half of the group were trained as ministers and several, such as Thomas Charles Edwards and Daniel Silvan Evans, represented the interaction between non-conformity and educational reform. Also represented were the London Welsh by members such as John Williams and Henry Owen. The majority of these older members were keen bibliophiles and several had substantial private Welsh libraries, particularly John Williams, William Wynne and Henry Owen. These collectors were keen to establish a national repository for Wales which they deemed appropriate for their books and MSS.

The second group include men who were born from 1852-1872: Thomas Ellis, Edward Anwyl, John Humphreys Davies, Thomas Francis Roberts, Owen Morgan Edwards, John Gwenogvryn Evans and Daniel Lleufer Thomas. Of the seven, five attended or worked for Aberystwyth University and all of them attended Oxford University.<sup>104</sup> Importantly, they were all members of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society and the majority were also involved with Cymru Fydd.

Therefore, the Welsh library committee represented the cultural elite of Wales. The older group had been nurtured in the non-conformist chapels where Welsh-language education had been maintained. The early technocrats who had founded the higher education system in Wales and viewed institutions like the national library as solely symbols of a burgeoning nation were now largely absent in mid-Wales, although present in places like Cardiff. The younger members of the committee were, in the main, the

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<sup>104</sup> John Gwenogvryn Evans did not actually enrol at Oxford but lived there and attended many of John Rhys lectures on Welsh philology. He was conferred an honorary MA in 1887. 'John Gwenogvryn Evans', WBO, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

product of the new higher education system in Wales which coincided with a Welsh cultural reawakening. However, although the study of the Welsh language and history began to develop at the Welsh colleges the resurgence was strongest in areas outside Wales, including Oxford and London where many of the men spent their intellectually formative years. Even though the political nationalism propagated by Cymru Fydd ultimately failed the formation of Welsh national institutions was kept on the political agenda by persistent Welsh Liberals. Therefore the mid-1890s was a point where influential Welsh scholars, culturally-minded Liberal politicians and affluent Welsh individuals, who had a passion for Welsh books and MSS, joined forces.

These findings concur with David L. Adamson's theory (which directly challenges Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* theory) that there was a 'pattern of capital accumulation in Wales' and that these resources part-funded the development of new nationalistic institutions.<sup>105</sup> Adamson identified the pivotal role played by Welsh political elites in supporting specifically Welsh legislation, which was evidently key to the NLW's evolution.<sup>106</sup> Also, Adamson argues that the short-lived political nationalism of the early 1890s – primarily focused on home rule – was then channelled into cultural national projects championed by Welsh elites once the Cymru Fydd movement collapsed. This behaviour is evidenced in the resurrection of the NLW campaign group in 1896 (the same year as the collapse of Cymru Fydd) which quickly, in Adamson's words, became 'the preoccupation of Welsh intellectuals.'<sup>107</sup>

#### **IV. Safeguarding a National Library for Wales 1900-1905**

In 1899 the leading light of the NLW campaign Thomas Ellis died suddenly at the age of forty. The library committee noted 'their irreparable loss' but, by this point, the campaign

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<sup>105</sup> David L. Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), p.183

<sup>106</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.121

<sup>107</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.123



was firmly established and therefore did not fall apart following his death.<sup>108</sup> By 1899 the Welsh library had been assigned its own room in the college and a printed catalogue had been compiled.<sup>109</sup> John Glyn Davies had been appointed as librarian and he had a keen interest in Welsh books and MSS; John Gwenogvryn Evans had been chosen as the honorary librarian of the Welsh library in Aberystwyth.<sup>110</sup> Many publishers had agreed to send a single copy of each new publication free of charge, and the library was also receiving seven Welsh newspapers and nineteen English newspapers at no cost.<sup>111</sup> The committee members themselves had begun to make financial donations and plans were afoot to begin to purchase MSS that came up for sale.<sup>112</sup> In 1894 John Gwenogvryn Evans had been appointed as Inspector of Welsh Manuscripts for the Historical Manuscripts Commission and it was in this role that he helped negotiate the purchase of the Shirburn MSS (later the Llanstephan MSS) on behalf of John Williams.

Most importantly, the committee had chosen a piece of land just above the town called Groythan which was suitable for the NLW building.<sup>113</sup> This land had been purchased by Lord Rendel, now the president of the college, and it was planned that he would lease the land at a nominal rent to the committee. Separately, during 1898 in Cardiff, land was purchased by Cardiff Corporation to build a town hall. There was also room for a collection of other municipal buildings and a site was earmarked for a National Museum.<sup>114</sup> After 1903, when a government grant for a national museum and library for Wales was in discussion this site was set aside for a combined museum and library development.

Between 1900 and 1902 the Welsh library at Aberystwyth continued to progress under the guardianship of John Glyn Davies, as did the public library in Cardiff under

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<sup>108</sup> WLCM, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1899.

<sup>109</sup> WLCM, 17<sup>th</sup>, February, 1897

<sup>110</sup> WLCM, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1899, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1899.

<sup>111</sup> WLCM, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1897

<sup>112</sup> WLCM, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1898

<sup>113</sup> WLCM, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1897; 17<sup>th</sup> February 1898

<sup>114</sup> 'Cardiff and the Welsh National Museum', *South Wales Daily News*, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1898 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), p.6.

John Ballinger. On the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1903, William Jones, Liberal Party MP for Arfon, Caernarfonshire, once again proposed to the House of Commons that Wales needed its own museum, like those of Scotland and Ireland, with the motion seconded by John Herbert Lewis. In response to William Jones, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Hayes Fisher, stated that, in his opinion, previous proposals for a museum in Wales had been vague with no clear idea on what type of cultural institution was required and, without a capital city, where the building or buildings were to be situated. He felt that even if a capital city could still not be decided upon a more concrete proposal for a museum and library could be developed. So, he suggested that Welsh members should set up a sub-committee to formulate a proposal, including an estimation of the costs of such a scheme.

In response to the parliamentary debate a sub-committee was formed which included the joint conference of MPs, the chairmen of county councils, the principals of the colleges and the chairman and chief executive of the Board of Education. A meeting was held at the House of Commons in June 1903, and as a result of this consultation Sir Isambard Owen, Senior Deputy Chancellor of the University of Wales, was asked to write a draft proposal to be submitted to Parliament, which was published in March 1904. The sub-committee met again in May 1904 to discuss the proposal, and it was accepted after some discussion. Broadly, Isambard Owen's scheme separated the museum and library and recommended that the location of these institutions should be decided by arbitrators appointed by the Privy Council also a more concrete estimation of the total cost was presented. The museum was expected to cost approximately £50,000 for the building, fixtures and fittings with a running cost of £8,000 per year, and the library £20,000 to construct with £2,000 needed annually to maintain it for the next five to ten years.<sup>115</sup> This

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<sup>115</sup> 'The National Museum and Library Scheme', *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1904, p.6.

was an important moment in the campaign as it was the first time that the government had seriously considered funding a museum and library for Wales.

In November 1904 the parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education Sir William Anson MP wrote to Austen Chamberlain, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. Anson had visited Cardiff and Aberystwyth in the September to assess the sites for the national library and museum, suggesting that these towns were already regarded as frontrunners.<sup>116</sup> Anson stated in a letter that ‘Cardiff is clearly marked out as the place for the Museum. It is most readily accessible to the largest number of Welsh people; [and] it already possesses a museum...containing fine specimens.’<sup>117</sup> ‘The National Library on the other hand, might well be placed at Aberystwyth for several reasons. Aberystwyth is in the heart of Wales; it is accessible as any place in mid Wales; and there is a strong feeling indicated by resolutions passed in seven County Councils that this should be the recognised home of the Library.’<sup>118</sup> Anson goes on to highlight the suitability of the proposed site for the library in Aberystwyth, the College library’s wealth of MSS and books, John Williams’ important collections and the lack of MSS at the Cardiff municipal library.<sup>119</sup> Anson was also clear that the library would not be of a ‘general character’ as its primary function would be to collect books and MSS in the Welsh language or in other languages on subjects relating to Wales: ‘[i]t would therefore be attractive to students of a special class, and its accessibility would not be a paramount consideration...It would seem therefore that practical reasons as well as Welsh sentiment point to Aberystwyth.’<sup>120</sup>

Anson’s fully formed and persuasive arguments concerning the two separate institutions, which he expressed to Chamberlain in his correspondence, are surprising considering that the Privy Council committee to select an appropriate location(s) had not

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<sup>116</sup> TNA, Records of the Privy Council, PC8/608, Wales: Establishment of National Museum and National Library: findings of committee of council, No.93.931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.1.

<sup>117</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.1.

<sup>118</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.2.

<sup>119</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.2.

<sup>120</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.3.

yet been appointed. Anson highlighted in his letter many of the same arguments contained in a pamphlet entitled 'The Welsh Library', dated September 1904. This pamphlet was a precursor of the later official statement submitted by Aberystwyth to the Privy Council committee in May 1905, but seems to have been sent to the Privy Council around the time that Anson and Chamberlain were in discussion.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, Aberystwyth library campaign committee's early efforts to, briefly, put forward Aberystwyth's case may have had more impact on the decision than the later full statement.

Even at this early stage, the library was already being viewed as an elitist establishment for a 'special class' of student, whereas the museum was expected to draw a larger and more diverse audience.<sup>122</sup> As a result, Aberystwyth's accessibility, or lack of, was not viewed as a hindrance by the British government, which was in stark contrast to the views expressed in contemporary South Walian press reports and Cardiff's later official statement.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, Anson, alongside his practical assessment of the sites, was aware of a 'sentimental' bias in favour of mid-Wales which he communicated to Chamberlain.

The 'story' of Aberystwyth being the true home of the National Library had been emphasised in the Welsh Library's pamphlet (September 1904); it was a strong narrative that had been developed over a considerable period of time, whereas the Cardiff campaign was very much in its infancy. The pamphlet's aim was to demonstrate to the committee the longevity of the campaign and to place it within a historical context, focused on the development of educational institutions in Aberystwyth. The pamphlet stressed 'the healthfulness' of the location and it emphasised that Aberystwyth was 'in the heart of the

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<sup>121</sup> PC8/608, No.93,952, 'The Welsh Library at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and the Proposed Museum Grants for Wales', September, 1904.

<sup>122</sup> PC8/608, No.93,931, Letter to Austen Chamberlain from William Anson, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1904, pp.1-2.

<sup>123</sup> *The Western Mail* was an English language and Tory-leaning newspaper. NLW Newspaper Archive (microfilm), 'Location of the Library', *The Western Mail*, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1905, p.4; *Memorial of the Corporation of Cardiff praying that his Majesty's government may be recommended to appoint Cardiff as the site of the national museum and library for Wales* (Cardiff: Western Mail, 1905).

Welsh-speaking portions of the Principality’, inferring that the town was central, both physically and metaphorically.<sup>124</sup>

Chamberlain promptly responded to Anson and was widely in agreement with his assessment, but emphasised the need for ‘the authority of the Privy Council for the decision’ as had been requested by the deputation led by Alfred Thomas.<sup>125</sup> Chamberlain feared that if the decision was made by the government it would not be accepted by the interested parties and he also saw the assessment process as an opportunity to determine how much financial support might come from local sources, he stated that ‘[t]his, in fact, should be one of the chief demonstrating factors in the choice of sites.’<sup>126</sup>

Writing to Edward Henry Pelham, who was also on the Board of Education, Anson expressed that he was keen that the members of the Privy Council committee should be ‘more specially informed on scientific or antiquarian subjects’ and suggested Lord Avebury, Lord Kelvin and Mr Haldane.<sup>127</sup> In a letter to Robert Laurie Morant, who was acting permanent secretary to the Board of Education, Pelham stated that Almeric William Fitzroy, clerk of the Privy Council, had suggested Lord Jersey, Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Sir Edward Fry as suitable candidates for this privy committee.<sup>128</sup> Fitzroy did not agree with Anson that the committee needed to have specialised knowledge, but that they only ‘be fully competent to deal with and duly consider any evidence that might

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<sup>124</sup> PC8/608, No.93.952, ‘The Welsh Library at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and the Proposed Museum Grants for Wales’, September, 1904.

<sup>125</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to William Anson from Austen Chamberlain, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1904.

<sup>126</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Letter to William Anson from Austen Chamberlain, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1904.

<sup>127</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Edward Henry Pelham from William Anson, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

Lord Avebury (John Lubbock 1889-1918) was an English banker, Liberal politician and scientific writer who was interested in natural history. Lord Kelvin (William Thomson 1824-1907) was an Irish mathematician, physicist and a lifelong Liberal in politics. It is unclear whether ‘Mr Haldane’ refers to John Scott Haldane (1860-1936) the Scottish physiologist who worked extensively on industrial health and safety or, Richard Burdon Haldane (1856-1928) Scottish Liberal politician, educationalist and Lord Chancellor.

<sup>128</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Robert Laurie Morant from Edward Henry Pelham, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

Lord Jersey (Victor Child Villars 1845-1915) was an English colonial governor, Conservative and considerable landowner. Lord Balfour (Alexander Bruce 1849-1921) was a Scottish Conservative politician, sat in the Lords and was a frequent committee member, including as chairman of the Royal Commission on Sunday Closing in Wales (1881-90). Sir Edward Fry (1827-1918) was an English judge, zoologist and presided over several royal commissions.

be put before them'.<sup>129</sup> Pelham also stated that Fitzroy had chosen Lord Jersey because he was a large Welsh landowner. Pelham had also consulted two other members of the Board of Education, William Bruce and Francis Grant Ogilvie, on the composition of the committee. Bruce (actually a member of Aberystwyth Welsh library committee, but born in Aberdare in Glamorganshire) preferred Avebury to Jersey, but was keen on Lord Balfour who he said had 'held an inquiry before in Wales and is very highly thought of there', he also proposed to keep Edward Fry for his 'knowledge of scientific things'.<sup>130</sup> Ogilvie entirely agreed with Fitzroy's choice as he thought Lord Avebury was too old for the work and believed that Fitzroy felt the same.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1905 Pelham wrote to George Herbert Duckworth, secretary to Austin Chamberlain, enclosing a draft order to appoint the committee to include the following members: Lord Balfour, the Earl of Jersey; and, a new addition, Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy.<sup>131</sup> Pelham emphasised again 'that the general idea of proposing them was to secure people whose names would carry weight' and cited Lord Balfour's role in the Sunday Closing inquiry where he had 'impressed the Welsh with his ability and impartiality'.<sup>132</sup> He explained that the Earl of Jersey was a landowner in Wales, but was 'not connected to either of the two places that are immediately affected by the inquiry', again, indicating, that even three months before the various towns submitted their statements that the British government had a clear idea of which municipalities would be successful.<sup>133</sup> Finally, Pelham clarified that Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy had been selected

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<sup>129</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Robert Laurie Morant from Edward Henry Pelham, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>130</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Robert Laurie Morant from Edward Henry Pelham, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>131</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Duckworth from Pelham, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

Lord Herbert Justice Cozens-Hardy (1838-1920) was an English judge and Liberal MP.

<sup>132</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Duckworth from Pelham, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>133</sup> The confirmation that only Aberystwyth and Cardiff were being considered was also highlighted by Bruce Argyll Campbell, *The Battle of the Sites: A National Museum for Wales*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2005, pp.165-166.

because of his background as a lawyer and his considerable knowledge of the university sector.<sup>134</sup>

The members of the Privy Council committee and the issues that they would be considering were officially announced in February 1905. Once again, local financial support was recognised as a paramount concern and out of the four points for the committee to judge three focused on costs and contributions.<sup>135</sup> In a letter from Duckworth to Pelham written just before the announcement of the appointment of the Privy Council committee, Duckworth stressed that '[a]llusion to the proportion to be given to the Library and to the Museum, has been omitted intentionally as the chancellor thinks that this must be settled between him and Sir Wm. Anson after the committee has reported.'<sup>136</sup> It is clear that the government did not want to quell potential financial support from Wales by promising too much grant money and by publicising that the committee's focus would be on financial contributions (rather than archival collections or population levels) it promised an even greater swell of support.

In sum, the formation of the Privy Council committee was stimulated by the deputation led by Alfred Thomas, as they were unable to come to a decision on where the museum and library should be situated. This group of representatives from Wales looked to the British government to come to an impartial decision on their behalf, it was therefore not the case that these decisions were a top-down initiative from the British government imposing a particular schema. Jenkins declared that 'the members of the Parliamentary Conference were prepared to pocket their national pride and accept the classical verdict of compromise, to be adjudged by representatives of the higher echelon of the English Establishment.'<sup>137</sup> It is likely that the conference members would not have described the

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<sup>134</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Duckworth from Pelham, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>135</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Privy Council Minutes, Announcement of the appointment of the Privy Council committee to discuss the siting of the National Museum and Library, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1905.

<sup>136</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Pelham from Duckworth, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>137</sup> Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.110.

transferring of responsibility to the government in such harsh terms, as their motivation was to prevent a stalemate from occurring. It is likely that Jenkins' view of this incident, possibly through the prism of Wales' twentieth-century history, places Wales outside of the government framework, rather than as an active part of a decision-making process.

As a result, the members of the Privy Council committee had to, first and foremost, be recognisable and trustworthy, so the final decision would not be questioned or, worse, rejected by the Welsh people. Although it was probably the case that the committee did discuss the statements that were submitted, the decision to locate the museum in Cardiff and the library in Aberystwyth had already been decided by the Board of Education and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As Chamberlain had indicated in his letter to Anson in December 1904, the process of receiving statements from the various towns was a useful indicator of how much financial support was raised in the localities. Although not mentioned in the Chancellor's correspondence the submitting of the statements to the committee not only recorded the amount of subscribers but also encouraged further donations through lively fundraising campaigns. Predictions had been made on the amount the Exchequer would contribute to the establishment of these institutions, but the Chancellor had not committed himself, therefore, it benefitted the British government to wait to see how much the campaigns could raise themselves before promising specific amounts of financial support.<sup>138</sup>

In the three most prominent histories of the NLW the authors emphasised the important role the Aberystwyth statement played in securing the library for the town. In the first comprehensive history, published in 1937, Davies concluded that 'it will suffice to state that the Aberystwyth Committee made a praiseworthy impression with its *Statement*.'<sup>139</sup> Gildas Tibbott, ten years later, commended it as '[a] truly remarkable

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<sup>138</sup> PC8/608, No.93.931, Board of Education Minute Papers, Letter to Duckworth from Pelham, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1905.

<sup>139</sup> Davies, *The National Library of Wales*, pp.11-12.



document’ and David Jenkins, described the Aberystwyth statement as ‘a convincing document, closely argued’.<sup>140</sup> Without the knowledge of the private correspondence between the Chancellor and the Board of Education, Davies, Tibbott and Jenkins believed that the quality of the statement had directly affected the outcome of the Privy Council committee decision. However, in light of this new information it is evident that the decision had been made some months before and that, in the eyes of the British government, the statements provided only financial information.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905 a statement was issued by the Privy Council committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, which stated that the National Museum should be established in Cardiff and the National Library in Aberystwyth.<sup>141</sup> A memorandum attached to the statement provided information on how the committee reached their decision which contained a summary of the contributions proposed by each town, including Swansea and Caernarvon. Alongside the financial contributions the names of collections of books and artefacts were listed, however, there was no reference to these items in the preceding summary. The committee stated that they decided not to place both institutions in the same town as they wanted the museum ‘in the largest centre of population’. The reasons for siting the library in Aberystwyth were ‘geographical and linguistic’ and that they wished to provide students with ‘a more healthy and tranquil atmosphere than could be found in the neighbourhood of huge industrial settlements.’<sup>142</sup>

It is clear that the committee had stuck to the brief as the majority of the report was dedicated to financial arrangements, with only a paragraph on their reasons for choosing the particular locations. As predicted, this is an indication that the committee, or in reality the Chancellor of the Exchequer, were less concerned with the quality of the

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<sup>140</sup> Tibbott, ‘The National Library of Wales and its Charter’, p.90; Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War*, p.116.

<sup>141</sup> PC8/608, No.94.778, Privy Council Office: Report of Committee of the Privy Council, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905.

<sup>142</sup> PC8/608, No.94.778, Privy Council Office: Report of Committee of the Privy Council, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905, p.3.

collections and more focused on the monetary contributions which would build and fund these institutions. Therefore, the decision on where these institutions were located was based on financial calculations that enabled the British government to contribute as little money as possible. As will become clear in the following chapter, a large percentage of the subscriptions were dependent on Aberystwyth being awarded the library, so if Cardiff had hosted both institutions the money raised in Aberystwyth would not necessarily have been transferable. The committee were optimistic that 'with some support from outside it might not be impossible to find the balance in the Country.'<sup>143</sup>

## V. Conclusion

It is useful to compare the circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century with the late-nineteenth century to ascertain what enabled a national library to develop latterly, as both periods saw calls for such an institution. In the late nineteenth century several factors came into play which influenced the progress of the library campaign which were absent in the middle of the century. One factor was the creation of a 'National' Eisteddfod which became a public forum where national reform could be discussed and actioned, with the support of a reinvigorated HSC.

The founding of the UCW facilitated the creation of a NLW, of sorts, but, for a variety of reasons, the college did not invest in the library's future which resulted in a period of stasis. The fire permanently altered how the college was perceived which, by association, had a positive impact on the *de facto* NLW. As a result of the fundraising drive the profile of the general library was raised and the existence of the 'Welsh library' became more widely known.

The campaign for a library was driven largely by a small elitist group. The non-conformist chapel culture and the university environment, in both Wales and Oxford, continued to nurture individuals who valued the Welsh language and history, leading to

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<sup>143</sup> PC8/608, No.94.778, Privy Council Office: Report of Committee of the Privy Council, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905, p.4.

a resurgence in Welsh cultural nationalism from the mid-1880s. It is against the backdrop of political reform from the late 1860s and the expansion of the Welsh Liberal party that this cultural nationalism became intertwined with Welsh political nationalism. Under these circumstances the NLW became a cultural repository and academic resource, as well as a politicised symbol of an emerging nation.

The Privy Council committee, for all intents and purposes, was a facade created in order to give validity to the decision. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's main priority was to gauge the potential fundraising opportunities in Wales and it appears that the financial calculations were the determining factor in where the library and museum were to be situated. Therefore the importance and influence attached, by the likes of Tibbott and Jenkins, to the official statements submitted to the committee in May 1905 seems now to have been overstated.<sup>144</sup>

However, it appears that the Welsh library committee was unaware of the government's private discussions, therefore the Aberystwyth statements demonstrate how the library committee attempted to use Welsh national identity as a divisive tool to bolster the Aberystwyth bid. The strategy of the library committee was to connect the campaign with a relatively uncomplicated version of Welsh national identity predicated on a rural, non-industrial and Welsh-speaking conception. To use Michael Billig's terminology, the library committee was involved in the process of 'flagging' signifiers which connected to a specific version of Welsh nationhood.

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<sup>144</sup> Jenkins, *Refuge in Peace and War*, pp.113-115; Tibbott, 'The National Library of Wales and its Charter', p.90.

### **Chapter Three: The National Library of Wales' Building Fund 1903-1916**

The previous chapter explored in detail the purpose of the Privy Council committee and the important role fundraising played in the Treasury's decision-making process. It has been stated that Aberystwyth raised £20,000 in subscriptions for the library building fund by May 1905, but how did this work in practice? The period of time between the appointment of the Privy Council committee in February 1905 and the submission date for the town statements was only four months, so this chapter analyses how these pledges were collected, who the subscribers were and how the Treasury stipulations influenced this process. Furthermore, fundraising continued after Aberystwyth had been awarded the National Library of Wales (NLW), so these later subscriptions are also examined in detail.

In 1910 the NLW published a booklet which listed all of the subscribers to the building fund from when the committee was first established in 1903 up to the time of publication. The booklet listed their addresses and pledged amounts and by 1910 a total of 872 subscriptions had been recorded. These subscriptions came from individuals, couples, families, businesses, groups and local authorities, who pledged from as little as 10s. (50p) up to £5,000.

No detailed analysis has hitherto been carried out on these early subscriptions; only the larger subscriptions and the combined pledges from the quarrymen of Ffestiniog and the teachers of Cardiganshire were singled out by David Jenkins in *A Refuge in Peace and War*. Jenkins chose to focus on the post-1910 subscriptions including the Liverpool Appeal of 1913, later contributions by local councils and the support of the South Wales Miners' Federation from early 1914.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, this chapter analyses the first wave of subscriptions to determine how the stipulations outlined by the Privy Council committee framed the fundraising

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<sup>1</sup> David Jenkins, *A Refuge in Peace and War: The National Library of Wales to 1952* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 2002), pp.169-174.

campaign. In addition, this chapter explores how and in what ways subscribers were targeted, why they might have subscribed to such a scheme, and if they fulfilled their pledges. Part I of this chapter outlines the origins of the NLW fundraising campaign which emerged from the early government debates (1903-1905) and compares it with the University College of Wales' (UCW) fundraising operation in the nineteenth century. Part II focuses on the support from outside Wales and questions why Welsh diaspora communities chose to subscribe to such a scheme. Part III concentrates on the campaign in Wales and how the canvassing tactics differed from those employed in England. Part IV evaluates some of the library's fundraising tactics post-1910, as the canvassers continued to hone their skills, and it reveals how the library attempted to collect the financial pledges made to the building fund.

This chapter will question whether the pattern of subscriptions indicates that an influential core of key personnel were the driving force behind the library campaign, or whether a mass movement in support of a National Library for Wales played a significant role? Did the majority of the support come from those residing in Wales or from the Welsh diaspora based in British cities and beyond? How were ideas of Welsh national identity utilised to further the fundraising campaign and did this differ in response to the audience?

This chapter demonstrates that the Privy Council's conditions influenced how the fundraising campaign was structured and led to a garnering of local mass support rather than focusing solely on the backing from wealthy people. Therefore the participation of individuals from all levels of society is not an example of an unprovoked swell of support as these groups, in the main, were deliberately targeted using tailored fundraising tactics. This fundraising strategy relied heavily on preconceptions of national identity which were manipulated to suit the location and audience type. In addition, an analysis of the subscriptions reveals a definite distinction between an initial pledge to the fund and the

honouring of that pledge. The data shows that a significant number did not actually contribute which begs the question: if the campaign had focused on the library as a practical resource with educational benefits rather than as a patriotic symbol of national identity would they have had a higher success rate?

### **I. The Origins of the Fundraising Campaign**

William Jones MP in his speech to Parliament in March 1903 on the importance of a museum grant for Wales argued that

The self help shown by the Welsh people was remarkable. They had never come to this House for an educational grant without having made large contributions themselves. In Carnarvonshire the people had contributed in a very few years £20,000 towards secondary education. That was equivalent to a 7d. rate in the pound, and that was not done by Act of Parliament, but was simply the result of the zeal and zest of the Welsh peasants for education.<sup>2</sup>

Although William Jones was evidently a supporter for a museum grant for Wales and praises the Welsh people's self-sufficiency, the use of the word 'peasants' seems condescending. During the debate some of the other supporters adopted a similar tone when extolling the virtues of the Welsh people. For example, Major Wyndham-Quin, MP for South Glamorganshire, prefaces his commendation of the Welsh people's intelligence with the phrase 'on the whole', and Sir Joseph Lawrence, MP for Monmouthshire Boroughs, recalls a time when a colleague had to be converted to the sound of a Welsh choir after initially referring to them, derogatorily, as 'musical miners'.<sup>3</sup> While these MPs wanted to secure a museum grant for Wales and were attempting to present the Welsh in a positive light, their own supercilious view of the average Welsh citizen, from their privileged position in Westminster, seeped through.

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<sup>2</sup> Historic Hansard Online (HHO), HC Deb, 'Wales (National Museum Grant)', Vol.119, c.353, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1903.

<sup>3</sup> HHO, HC Deb, 'Wales (National Museum Grant)', Vol.119, c.356, c.359, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1903.

Up until this point the development of these national institutions had been the preoccupation of a relatively small group of elites and it was not a campaign that had significant wider national support. By 1903 it was clear that the government was not prepared to fund the scheme in its entirety, so the campaign's attention had now turned to the money the Welsh populace could contribute. The focus was very much on the philanthropic nature of the Welsh rather than how these institutions would directly benefit the average Welsh citizen. The circumstances of this campaign echo Graham Day and Richard Suggett's assessment of the founding of the higher education movement in Wales. They argue that this movement did not come from below but was 'a process of building up, and consolidating, the position of a middle class. The people were called upon for support only when it was clear that the middle classes could not secure their goals unaided.'<sup>4</sup>

In response to Jones, Hayes Fisher, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, stressed the importance of securing 'some local contribution either in money or in kind' which might mean that the committee 'would meet with something more than sympathetic consideration' when they next approached the Chancellor of the Exchequer.<sup>5</sup> News of this development quickly reached Aberystwyth, because on the 19<sup>th</sup> March the Welsh library committee urged the council 'to participate in the proposed museum grants for Wales.'<sup>6</sup> In addition, two weeks before Jones' speech, the Welsh library appeal committee in Aberystwyth had appointed members to 'a sub-committee to deal specially with the obtaining of funds for the erection of the New Library.'<sup>7</sup> The committee's actions indicate that the plans for a NLW in Aberystwyth were still at an embryonic stage and

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<sup>4</sup> Graham Day and Richard Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness: Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Wales' in G. Rees, J. Bujra, P. Littlewood, H. Newby and T.L. Rees (eds.), *Political Action and Social Identity Class, Locality and Ideology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.91-115, p.111.

<sup>5</sup> HHO, HC Deb, 'Wales (National Museum Grant)', Vol.119, c.363, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1903.

<sup>6</sup> NLW Archive, NLW MS 17715C, Welsh Library Committee Minutes 1896-1906 (WLCM), 19<sup>th</sup> March 1903.

<sup>7</sup> NLW Archive, MS 4476C, Welsh Library Appeal Committee Minutes 1903-1906 (WLACM), 26<sup>th</sup> February 1903.

that it was more the suggestion of a possible government grant that galvanised the committee into action, rather than a fervent grassroots movement. The suggestion to raise funds through local contributions came from the British government therefore the pledges to the building fund are not necessarily an indication of a surge of unprompted support for the library, but an orchestrated fundraising campaign in order to further the proposal in the House of Commons.

Isambard Owen's 1904 report which suggested separating the museum and library likely prompted the Aberystwyth appeal committee to streamline their campaign and just focus on securing the library for the town, rather than attempting to raise money for both, and failing to secure either institution. Previously, the committee had discussed raising funds for a joint library and museum but, compared to Cardiff, Aberystwyth was relatively poor.<sup>8</sup> Therefore the committee's decision to focus all efforts on raising £20,000 was pragmatic.

The decision to raise substantial funds to secure and establish a national library presented the committee with an immensely challenging task. Nevertheless, the UCW in Aberystwyth had been built on public donations, without the initial promise of a government grant, and the generosity of the community had helped to rebuild the college after the fire of 1885, therefore the Welsh were known for their public munificence. Contributions to the college fund from over 100,000 individuals were lauded in the introduction to *Statement in favour of the Selection of Aberystwyth*, which is a likely indication that the library committee planned to adopt a similar approach.<sup>9</sup> Later in the statement the idea of local rate contributions – championed by the Cardiff campaign – was rejected as it favoured more populous areas. The statement concludes that 'the acceptance of a rate-subsidy from one local authority would...inevitably tend to impair

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<sup>8</sup> WLACM, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1903.

<sup>9</sup> *Statement in Favour of the Selection of Aberystwyth as the Place for the Establishment of the National Library for Wales* (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1905), p.2.



the national character of the trust under which the National Library would be administered.’<sup>10</sup> In the library committee’s view, the raising of public contributions was their best option, as pursuing a rate-subsidy put the Aberystwyth location for the library in jeopardy, therefore the hard graft of raising funds was a worthy sacrifice.

A closer analysis of the donations that supported the university reveals similarities between the two campaigns and their methodological approaches. The hotel on the seafront in Aberystwyth which was purchased by the provisional college committee in 1867 for £10,000 was almost entirely funded by the industrialist David Davies of Llandinam, who had made his fortune in the coal and railway industries.<sup>11</sup> It is also David Davies’ legacy that provided the library building fund with its biggest donation from an individual, given by the widow and children of Davies’ son Edward. The Davies family’s legacy in Wales is far-reaching, continuing well into the twentieth century providing support for educational and religious institutions, libraries and museums. Davies’ donation provided the college with a much needed building which enabled the concept of a university for Wales to become a physical reality. The Davies family’s contribution to the library fund made up a quarter of the collected donations by 1910. The historical narratives of the college and the library have emphasised the many small contributions donated by the working people of Wales, which were numerous, but the backbone of both building funds was provided by the legacy of a single ‘self-made’ capitalist.

It is clear from both fundraising campaigns that it was the immense hard work of a few key individuals that Welsh communities contributed financially in significant numbers. Individuals were not always eager to donate to establish these national institutions and, in some instances, they were cajoled. By 1875 the college was running out of money so Hugh Owen embarked on a fundraising campaign by attending meetings,

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<sup>10</sup> *Statement in favour of the Selection of Aberystwyth*, p.6.

<sup>11</sup> E.L. Ellis, *The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1872-1972* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972), pp.16-17.

forming committees, organising collections at chapels and churches, as well as going door-to-door; it was reported that by the end of that year £3,100 had been raised with contributions from approximately 70,000 people.<sup>12</sup> The stipendiary magistrate Daniel Lleufer Thomas and the registrar of the UCW John Humphreys Davies managed the majority of the library building fund operation. They adopted a similar approach to Owen when raising funds for the library, by forming local committees and going directly into communities to appeal for support. It is evident from documents such as the *Statement in favour of Aberystwyth* that the library appeal committee looked to the Aberystwyth College fundraising campaigns for inspiration, as well as to prove that such an ambitious scheme could be realised.<sup>13</sup>

The Chancellor of the Exchequer received a deputation in relation to the museum grants in June 1904 led by Sir Alfred Thomas. In July 1904, fifteen members of the Aberystwyth Welsh library appeal committee were appointed to a separate executive and organising committee ‘for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions towards the Building Fund’.<sup>14</sup> The majority of this sub-committee were well known figures in Welsh political and cultural life and as a collective they represented a variety of institutions, industries and geographical areas. In the published list of the subscribers to the building fund the majority of the committee members have Welsh addresses, but further investigation reveals their connections often reached far beyond Wales. A number were working or had worked in London, and several had links with the House of Commons. Most had attended university and, on the whole, they were either London or Oxbridge graduates. Consequently, the driving force behind the initial campaign was a well-connected Welsh political and cultural elite, rather than an Aberystwyth based collective.

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<sup>12</sup> Ellis, *The University of Wales*, pp.45-46.

<sup>13</sup> *Statement in favour of the Selection of Aberystwyth*, p.2-3.

<sup>14</sup> WLACM, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1904.

In February 1905 Lord President of the Privy Council announced that the Treasury had agreed to make a contribution towards the cost of establishing a museum and library for Wales, and that a Privy Council committee was to be formed to decide where these institutions should be located. In his announcement it was made clear that a great emphasis would be placed by the committee on ‘the amount of support which is offered...by the local authorities and inhabitants of the several places that may be suggested’ and ‘the contributions that may be expected from local sources either in land, money or building towards the above-mentioned cost’.<sup>15</sup> It was clear that the amount of public support would directly impact on the success of a town’s bid, however, it was not the case that the appeal committee could just target wealthy Welsh individuals – often living outside of Wales – as the Privy Council committee had explicitly stressed the importance of local support. Therefore, the committee needed to balance securing the larger contributions from key individuals whilst encouraging mass participation from Cardiganshire residents, if they were to be successful. As highlighted in chapter two, these government stipulations were less about gauging public interest in these national institutions and more about securing as much funding from the public as possible, which lessened the need for a large government grant.

## **II. Support Outside of Wales**

An analysis of the subscribers’ locations reveals that almost every subscriber was located in Great Britain. Out of all the subscribers 91% were living in Wales and almost 9% in England, Scotland and Ireland, with less than 1% living abroad.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, while there were very few subscribers located outside of Great Britain, several of the contributions were substantial, so made a significant impact on the building fund as a whole, representing 2.6% of the total raised up to 1910. The largest donation from outside

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Imperial Grant for Welsh Museum and Library’, *Evening Express*, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1905 (5<sup>th</sup> edition), p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Of the 1632 subscribers 6 could not be located due to a lack of information, so these percentages are based on the 1626 whose locations are known.

of Great Britain came from William T. Jones who was residing in Melbourne, Australia.<sup>17</sup> Jones was a native of Aberystwyth and was a well-known mining speculator and racehorse owner.<sup>18</sup> Like the Davies family of Llandinam, Jones made other financial donations to Wales' educational institutions, including £500 to Aberystwyth College in 1889 to complete the inner ornamental roof.<sup>19</sup> Jones' £500 pledge to the library building fund came in the first half of 1904 and was on the condition that the library was built in Aberystwyth.<sup>20</sup> It is likely that individuals who had previously donated to other Welsh causes were targeted by the appeal committee, for example, included in a box of materials relating to the NLW building fund is a published list of subscribers for the University of North Wales' Building Fund, 1905.<sup>21</sup>

Several other smaller donations came from Australia, North America and South Africa ranging from £1 to £25. The £25 subscription came from Pembrokeshire born Sir William Thorne, three times mayor of Cape Town and director of a merchant firm.<sup>22</sup> Thorne was also president of the Cambrian Society in Cape Town and actively promoted the gathering of Welsh residents and the continuation of Welsh traditions, including the marking of St. David's Day.<sup>23</sup> The only other donation from Australia came from a professor of law at the University of Adelaide named William Jethro Brown. Brown had been born in Southern Australia but had studied and worked in Great Britain, including as a professor of law at the UCW in Aberystwyth. Brown was at Aberystwyth from 1901

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<sup>17</sup> NLW Archive, T1/2 General material relating to the collection of funds for the library building, List of subscribers and amounts 1910-24, *List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1910), p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Trove Digitised Newspapers Online, 'Obituary Mr W.T. Jones', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 21st November 1911, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> 'University College Wales. A Generous Gift.' *South Wales Daily News*, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1889, p.7.

<sup>20</sup> 'The Welsh Library', *Evening Express*, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1905 (5<sup>th</sup> edition), p.2.

<sup>21</sup> NLW Archive, G4/1, Building Fund: Subscriptions and donations towards various phases of the NLW's construction, 1905-1951, List of Subscribers University of North Wales Permanent Building Fund, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1905.

<sup>22</sup> Walter H. Wills (ed.), *The Anglo-African Who's Who and Biographical Sketchbook* (London: Gill, 1907), p.362.

<sup>23</sup> 'Letter from South Africa. Welshmen at the Cape', *Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser*, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1904, p.8.

to 1906 during the height of the campaign for the NLW.<sup>24</sup> It is likely that he was acquainted with the campaigner Daniel Lleufer Thomas who was actively involved in setting up the law department at Aberystwyth. Although few in number the individual subscriptions from abroad were substantial and therefore a significant addition to the fund.

Considering the success of the 1890 fundraising campaign in North America conducted by Aberystwyth College, it is surprising how few library fund subscribers came from abroad. At the beginning of the campaign a lack of financial support from outside Great Britain is understandable, bearing in mind the short time available in which to attract subscribers before the Privy Council committee met, but this area continued to be neglected up until 1910. It could have been the case that a lengthy fundraising expedition was deemed impractical in terms of the cost of such a trip and the potential loss of key fundraisers from the campaign in Wales. Principal Edwards' expedition raised a healthy amount of over a thousand pounds for the new college library, but this took him the whole summer to collect. Furthermore, in 1890, when Principal Edwards embarked on his trip, the number of Welsh immigrants in America was at its peak: estimated to be over 100,000.<sup>25</sup> Over the subsequent decade numbers declined because rural Welsh residents moved to the South Wales coalfields for work, rather than going abroad. Therefore, it may have been deemed more cost-effective to dedicate fundraisers' energies to collecting subscriptions in Wales and in areas of England where pockets of Welsh migrants lived, rather than going any further afield. In fact, it is likely the majority of the overseas subscribers had links with members of the appeal committee and were contacted directly, rather than there being any systematic campaign strategy abroad.

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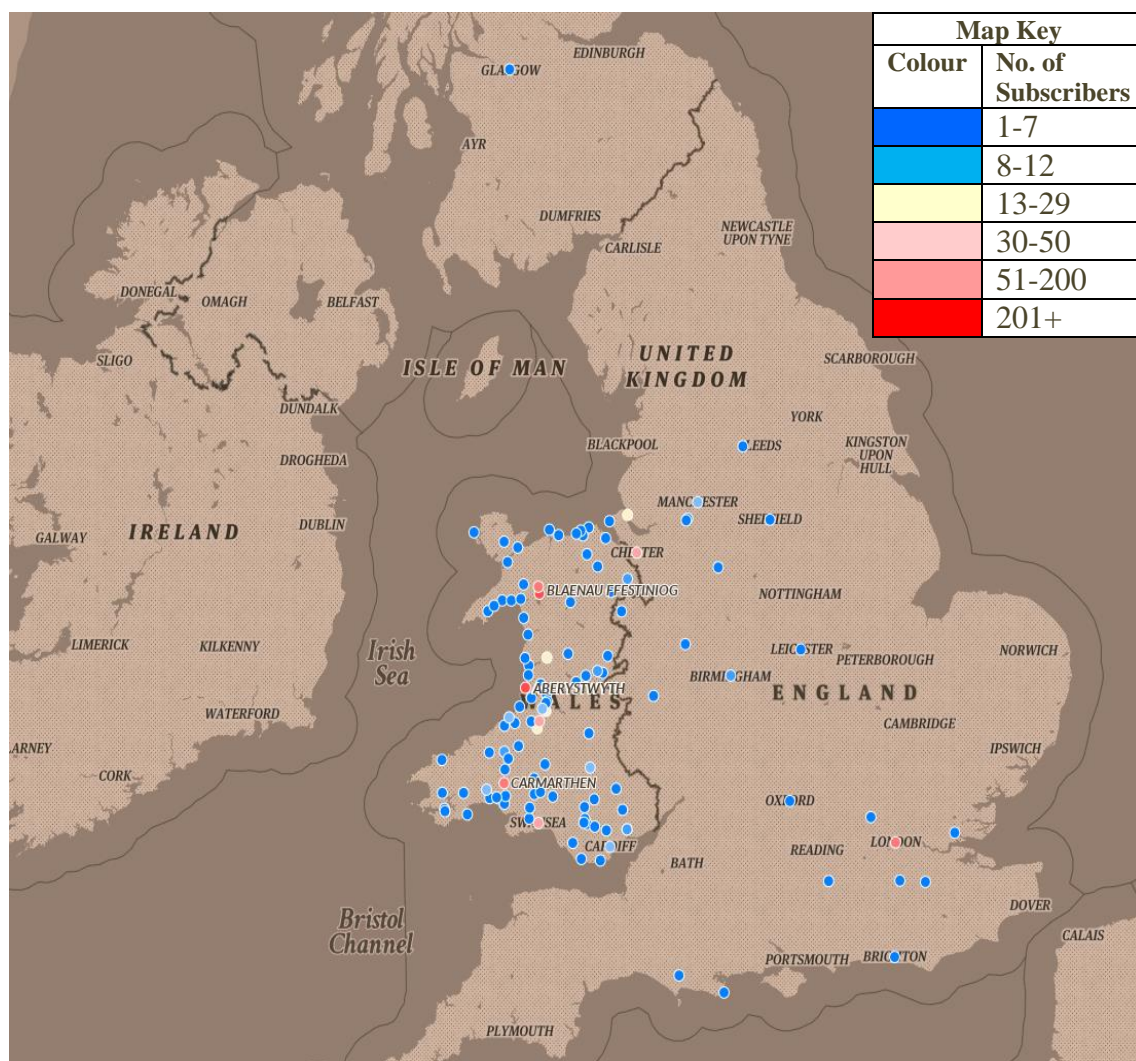
<sup>24</sup> The Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, Michael Roe, 'William Jethro Brown (1868–1930)', accessed 1st September 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, *Welsh Americans: A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p.46.

Below, Figure 3.1 shows the geographical spread of the building fund subscribers in Great Britain up to 1910. Unsurprisingly, significantly more people residing in towns in Wales (1475 subscribers) pledged money and Aberystwyth (223 subscribers) was a particular hotspot. Moreover, the town of Carmarthen (144 subscribers), which was targeted by the campaign committee, contained a significant number of subscribers. The majority of Wales-based subscribers were located in the towns of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Ffestiniog (combined, 806 subscribers).<sup>26</sup> This area was targeted by the campaign committee and contained a well organised group of residents who collected the subscriptions. Most of these subscribers were quarrymen who pledged small amounts, however, latterly the majority of these subscriptions went unfulfilled. The pledges made from England, Scotland and Ireland amount to £2,323 2s. 3d. (£2,323.11), 11% of the overall total. This amount was pledged by 145 subscribers with the majority residing in the cities of London, Chester, Manchester and Liverpool. Beyond these cities very few subscriptions were collected (£125 5s. 3d. (£125.26) from twenty subscribers) so it is clear that these areas were deliberately targeted by the committee.

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<sup>26</sup> In the subscribers list the majority of the Blaenau Ffestiniog and Ffestiniog pledges are listed under one heading as individual pledges were small. Although the list does not include the majority of the names of those who contributed in these areas it does provide the number of subscribers, and indicates that they were quarrymen.



**Figure 3.1: Geographical spread of the subscribers to the NLW building fund up to 1910.**

**Source:** *List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1910)

London Welsh residents were swiftly prioritised. Even as early as October 1904 it was decided that a dinner be organised to which they would be invited and Evan Vincent Evans and Llewellyn Edwards were charged with forming a committee for said residents.<sup>27</sup> Evans – a native of Merionethshire – was the managing director of Chancery Lane safe deposit office and a great supporter of Welsh cultural organisations: he was secretary of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and the Eisteddfod Association, as well as being a close friend of David Lloyd George.<sup>28</sup> Edwards was a non-conformist minister at a chapel near Clapham Common and had been assigned the enormous task of collecting subscriptions in North Wales and English towns.<sup>29</sup> The committee were acutely aware how well-known people could legitimatise a campaign so Lord Tredegar, Lord Kenyon and Lord Rendel were asked to be trustees of the fund, which they accepted in October 1904.<sup>30</sup> At the following meeting in February 1905, it was stressed that one of these three, or John Williams, should host the London dinner; the impact of a face-to-face encounter with such a luminary had the potential to increase subscriptions.<sup>31</sup> The nomination of Evans and Edwards as coordinators opened up a network of potential donors within Welsh cultural and religious circles. The committee's approach to fundraising in London shows that their aim was to secure the support of a few key individuals from the elite Welsh diaspora, rather than trying to drum up widespread support.

The Welsh library appeal sub-committee's approach to fundraising was multifaceted as in March 1905 they published an appeal booklet setting out Aberystwyth's claim for the NLW, which was to be sent out to Welshmen resident in London.<sup>32</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup> WLACM, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1904.

<sup>28</sup> Welsh Biography Online (WBO), 'Sir Evan Vincent Evans' (1851-1934), accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

<sup>29</sup> WLACM, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1904.

<sup>30</sup> WLACM 28<sup>th</sup> October 1904.

<sup>31</sup> WLACM, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1904, 24<sup>th</sup> February 1905.

<sup>32</sup> WLACM, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1905.



booklet emphasised the NLW's strong connections to Aberystwyth College and its role in founding the Welsh Library in 1873. Its aim was to convince the reader that

strenuous efforts must be made that these symbols of our nationality should be placed in a town characteristically Welsh. The one place, marked by its central geographical position as well as associated in our minds with the revival of the national spirit, is, without doubt, Aberystwyth – the seat of our premier, and for years our only, National College.<sup>33</sup>

The intention of the appeal was to connect with those who, although physically separated from their birthplace, engaged in activities relating to Wales such as attending chapel, joining Welsh groups or contributing financially to funded schemes back in Wales. The appeal also aimed to connect with former Cardiganshire residents who, now estranged, may have regarded Aberystwyth as 'characteristically Welsh' and liked to think of it as a place directly linked to 'the revival of the national spirit.' Susanne Lachenicht and Kirsten Heinsohn argue that '[s]ituations of exile and diaspora can enhance the formation of distinct national identities which might not have formed in the homeland.'<sup>34</sup>

The booklet contained a selection of photographs including several views of Aberystwyth College, Alexandra Hall (the university's female-only hall), and the Groglythan Land, where the NLW would be situated. These images showed the reader what had been achieved in Aberystwyth by way of public subscriptions and what could also be accomplished. The booklet emphasises the fact that 'no part of the cost of...[the Aberystwyth College] buildings or of the land has been paid out of public monies' even though a large percentage of the NLW would be built using money from the Treasury.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Aberystwyth University Archive, GB GB0982 GB 982 DM-D/M7/33, NLW - The Claims of Aberystwyth, *The National Library of Wales. The Claims of Aberystwyth* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1905), p.4.

<sup>34</sup> Susanne Lachenicht and Kirsten Heinsohn 'Diaspora Identities: Exile, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present – An Introduction' in Susanne Lachenicht and Kirsten Heinsohn (eds.), *Diaspora Identities: Exile, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2009), pp.7-15, p.13.

<sup>35</sup> *The National Library of Wales. The Claims of Aberystwyth*, p.14.

The authors of the pamphlet, through the use of images, emphasised the importance of philanthropy in Wales' history in order to encourage readers to pledge.

Several members of the committee had strong connections to London including John Williams who had worked as a medical doctor in the city and John Humphreys Davies who was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn. The non-conformist minister Llewelyn Edwards was the first minister of the Welsh chapel in Beauchamp Road which in 1902 had 204 adult members.<sup>36</sup> Edwards was the brother of Thomas Charles Edwards: the first principal of the UCW, who had embarked on an extensive fundraising tour of North America in 1890. Edwards himself pledged £10 10s. (£10.50) and, as an appeal committee member, it is probable that he would have encouraged his Welsh congregation to follow his example and subscribe to the building fund.

Although there is no direct evidence that links Edwards' congregation to the building fund there is proof that other Welsh chapels in London were targeted directly by the appeal committee. On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1905 a meeting led by John Herbert Lewis MP and Sir John Williams was held at the Jewin Chapel near Aldersgate Street, with, it was reported, about one hundred people in attendance.<sup>37</sup> Jewin Chapel was a hub of Welsh London life and was referred to as 'the mother church of Cardiganshire migrants in London', so many of the congregation would have hailed from Aberystwyth and the surrounding district.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Sir Evan Vincent Evans – who had hosted the very first meeting of the appeal committee at his home in Chancery Lane – was a loyal and notable member of the Jewin community, so was doubtless involved with spreading the news of the subscription drive.<sup>39</sup> At the meeting in April 1905 a resolution was passed supporting

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<sup>36</sup> Huw Edwards, *City Mission: The Story of London's Welsh Chapels* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2014), pp.261-263.

<sup>37</sup> 'London Welsh and the Sites Battle', *The Aberystwith Observer*, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.3.

<sup>38</sup> Anne Kelly Knowles, *Calvinists Incorporated* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.83

<sup>39</sup> Find My Past Online (FMP), Census Ref: RG14PN1201 RG78PN41 RD14 SD1 ED5 SN63, 1911 Census for England and Wales, Evan Vincent Evans Household; Edwards, *City Mission*, p.133.

the Aberystwyth claim and contributions were collected, which amounted to £150.<sup>40</sup> Huw Edwards claims that ‘the membership [of Jewin chapel] was dominated...by ordinary people, mostly dairy workers.’<sup>41</sup>

The London fund totalled £1,302 10s. 8d. (£1,302.58) in 1910 which was pledged by sixty-six subscribers. A third of these subscribers have been identified (on the 1901 or 1911 census) as working in the dairy industry. Apart from two dairymen who were born in London, the rest of this group were born in Wales, the majority in Cardiganshire. Emrys Jones emphasises the role that the Welsh played in London’s milk trade in a quotation from Charles Booth from 1903: ‘[t]hroughout the London milk trade generally the proportion of Welsh masters is very large...Common report and our own observations lead us to suppose that they number considerably more than 50% of the trade...they alone among the inhabitants of the United Kingdom can make cowkeeping in London pay’.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, Emrys Jones refers to one of the subscribers to the building fund by name: a William Jones who had a large dairy operation at Black Lion Yards just off Whitechapel Road in the East End of London, and was keeping up to forty cows at one time.<sup>43</sup> Although he had been born in London, William Jones, like the other dairymen, had family links to Cardiganshire.<sup>44</sup> The dairymen, on average, gave £15 14s. 5d. (£15.72) each to the building fund, evidence that they were relatively affluent. Their reason for subscribing may have been linked to their loyalty to Cardiganshire, rather than a more general allegiance to Wales. This interpretation is borne out in Sir John Williams’ speech to Jewin’s congregation, where Williams focused almost entirely on Cardiff’s shortcomings

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<sup>40</sup> ‘London Welsh and the Sites Battle’, *The Aberystwyth Observer*, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.3.

<sup>41</sup> Edwards, *City Mission*, p.67.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the Poor in London*, Second Series, Industries III, 1903 (New York, 1969), p.175 quoted in Emrys Jones ‘The Early Nineteenth Century’ in Emrys Jones (ed.), *The Welsh in London 1500-2000* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), p.106.

<sup>43</sup> G. Francis-Jones, *Cows, Cardis and Cockneys* (Aberystwyth, 1984) referenced in Emrys Jones ‘The Early Nineteenth Century’, pp.107-108; Emrys Jones ‘The Early Nineteenth Century’, p.108; FMP, Census Ref: RG14PN1482 RG78PN52 RD18 SD2 ED6 SN208, 1911 Census for England and Wales, William Jones Household.

<sup>44</sup> Emrys Jones ‘The Early Nineteenth Century’, pp.107-108.

in order to highlight why Aberystwyth was the true home of the nation. The rhetorical question: ‘Whence came the men who acted the leading part in the progressive movements which had taken place in the country?’ likely chimed with the more affluent members of the London Welsh community who were natives of Cardiganshire, who wished to play a role in the success of these new Welsh institutions.<sup>45</sup>

It is clear that the committee’s London Welsh chapel connections enabled them to target congregations who had strong links to Wales, and in many cases to mid-Wales – half of the London subscribers were born in Cardiganshire or the neighbouring county of Carmarthenshire. Over 79% of subscriptions fell between £5 and £25 and the London pledges represented 6.2% of the overall building fund total in 1910. As a result, even though subscriber numbers were relatively small (Carmarthen had 144 subscribers who pledged £253 14s 5d. (£253.72) compared to London’s sixty-six) the individual pledges were sizable. Unlike Aberystwyth, door-to-door fundraising in London would have been laboursome as Welsh inhabitants were quite unevenly distributed; Jones argues that there was ‘no apparent marked preference for any one district of London over another, and certainly no quarter that can be called ‘Welsh.’’<sup>46</sup> However, residents did come together on a regular basis to attend chapel and the committee evidently took advantage of that fact in order to build up the fund as quickly as possible, as the Privy Council committee deadline was imminent.

Chester’s subscriptions amounted to £58 12s 10d. (£58.64) and were collected by Ffestiniog born Owen Rowland Jones who was Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Mines, and living in Chester at the time.<sup>47</sup> Of the twenty-three Chester subscribers, five list their address as the Old Bank Buildings and worked either in finance or the law. One member of this group, Edward Owen Roberts, a barrister, pledged £10 to the building fund, which

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<sup>45</sup> ‘London Welsh and the Sites Battle’, *The Aberystwith Observer*, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.3.

<sup>46</sup> Emrys Jones, ‘The Early Nineteenth Century’, p.96.

<sup>47</sup> WLACM, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1905.

was the joint highest individual donation from Chester.<sup>48</sup> Born in Merionethshire, Roberts had been schooled in Aberystwyth and then studied for the bar in London.<sup>49</sup> As Roberts had a connection to Aberystwyth he may have encouraged others who worked with him to also pledge to the building fund, in fact, even though they were only a small group, half of Chester's total subscriptions came from workers at the Old Bank Buildings. In addition, several other Chester subscribers, even though not listed at the Old Bank Buildings, were more than likely connected to this group, including a stock broker, a retired barrister and a judge. Moreover, 67% of Chester's total pledges come from individuals who worked in either law or finance. Several of the appeal committee had trained at the bar (such as Daniel Lleufer Thomas and John Humphreys Davies) and had practised in Wales, so may have canvassed support from other law professionals, via law societies such as the Chester and North Wales Law Society, or through personal connections.

There is evidence of the committee targeting Welsh individuals in particular professions. In a letter from March 1905 to Daniel Lleufer Thomas from a Dr James Lloyd in Llanbradach he writes: [i]f you wrote to Mr R. R. Morgan solicitor Caerphilly I am sure he would contribute. He is a Cardi [from Cardiganshire]. There are many solicitors also in Cardiff who are Cardis.<sup>50</sup> R.R. Morgan went on to pledge £2 2s. (£2.10) and was the only subscriber in Caerphilly, strengthening the case that he was targeted directly. Thomas evidently took Lloyd's advice, and this method of selecting particular individuals likely extended to other law professionals with connections to Aberystwyth, and may have been how subscribers in Chester came to be enlisted.

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<sup>48</sup> FMP, Census Ref: RG14PN21881 RG78PN1303 RD450 SD3 ED11 SN2, 1911 Census for England and Wales, Edward Owen Roberts Household.

<sup>49</sup> St Werburgh's Roman Catholic Parish, Chester Website, 'In Memoriam of Edward Owen Roberts', accessed 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<sup>50</sup> NLW Archives, T1/1 General material relating to the collection of funds for the library building, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Letter from James Lloyd, Llanbradach to Daniel Lleufer Thomas, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1905.

By March 1905 the appeal committee in Aberystwyth was acutely aware that the Privy Council committee had been appointed and that they only had a limited time to raise substantial funds. It is recorded in the minutes that the Manchester Welsh Society had passed a resolution in support of Aberystwyth's claim, so in response Principal Roberts proposed that the support of Welsh societies in other towns be secured.<sup>51</sup> The support from the Manchester Welsh society had, more than likely, been garnered three weeks earlier, on St David's Day, when Sir John Williams had delivered an evocative speech to the society in which he had described the supporters of the Aberystwyth claim as 'the men of the mountains' and derogatorily labelled the Cardiff backers as 'the men of the plains'.<sup>52</sup> As a result, it appears the committee decided to target other Welsh societies as a way of swiftly accessing a wider Welsh community within a specific area. This approach is revealed in the appointment of Mr Llewellyn Wynne – the secretary of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union – to canvass support in Liverpool, Manchester and North Wales over a six to eight week period.<sup>53</sup> Similar to the London situation, the committee were keen to recruit individuals to canvass 'on the ground' who had knowledge of that particular community and were involved in specifically Welsh activities.

At the end of March it was reported that Principal Roberts had been to Liverpool 'enlisting the sympathy of the Welsh people' and that '[p]romises of substantial support have been received from wealthy Welshmen of the city'.<sup>54</sup> The targeting of Welsh societies, whose members would have been relatively affluent and middle class, is borne out in an analysis of the Manchester and Liverpool subscribers. The average pledge was £27 13s. 3d. (£27.66), a substantial amount to commit to a single cause, and the larger

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<sup>51</sup> WLACM, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1905.

<sup>52</sup> 'The Battle of the Sites. Sir John Williams on the claims of Aberystwyth', *The London Welshman*, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1905, pp.10-11.

<sup>53</sup> WLACM, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1905; WBO, 'Sarah Edith Wynne' (1842-1897), accessed 25th September 2015. Llewellyn Wynne was Sarah Edith's brother.

<sup>54</sup> 'Liverpool's Support', *Evening Express*, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1905 (1st edition), p.3.

donations came from industrialists, commercial traders and medical doctors. Llewellyn Wynne is listed as the organising secretary for the district and it appears he was also a member of the Liverpool Welsh National Society.<sup>55</sup> Wynne's network of contacts, via these various Welsh societies, would have been vital to the appeal committee, particularly as the time available to raise the subscriptions was so severely limited. Two Liverpool residents – Thomas Rowland Hughes and Alfred L. Jones – pledged, in total, £105 5s. (£105.25) to the building fund. According to the Liverpool Welsh National Society minutes both men were actively involved in the society's activities; therefore it is more than likely that Llewellyn Wynne played a part in securing these contributions.<sup>56</sup> Similar to London, the committee needed to locate potential donors in densely populated areas where many other nationalities also resided, therefore societies and chapels specifically relating to Wales were a valuable starting point.

### **III. The Campaign in Wales**

The larger pledges from professional groups such as civil servants, lawyers, industrialists and the dairymen only tell half of the story of the building fund. The campaign group was keen to sign up individuals pledging large amounts to build up the fund more quickly, but there was also pressure on them to engage with all levels of Welsh society, however little an individual would be able to contribute. Below, Figure 3.2 shows the areas where subscriptions were relatively low, but individuals' engagement with the campaign, was high. Figure 3.3 uses the numbers from 3.2 to calculate an average subscription for each area. For example, Merionethshire has the greatest number of subscribers by a significant margin, but the amount subscribed was relatively low and, on average, a person pledged only 5d. (42p). By contrast, in Lancashire twenty-one individuals pledged £581, so the average subscription equates to £27 13s. 3d. (£27.66). Cardiganshire, predictably,

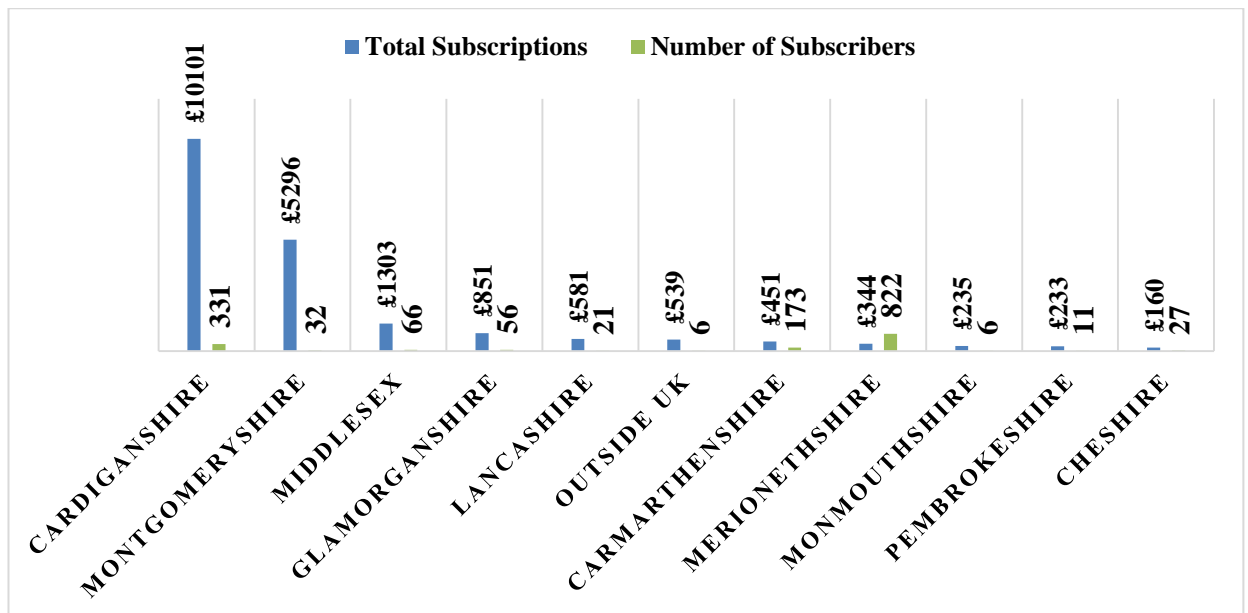
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<sup>55</sup> 'News of the Counties', *The Weekly News and Visitors' Chronicle*, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1904, p.3.

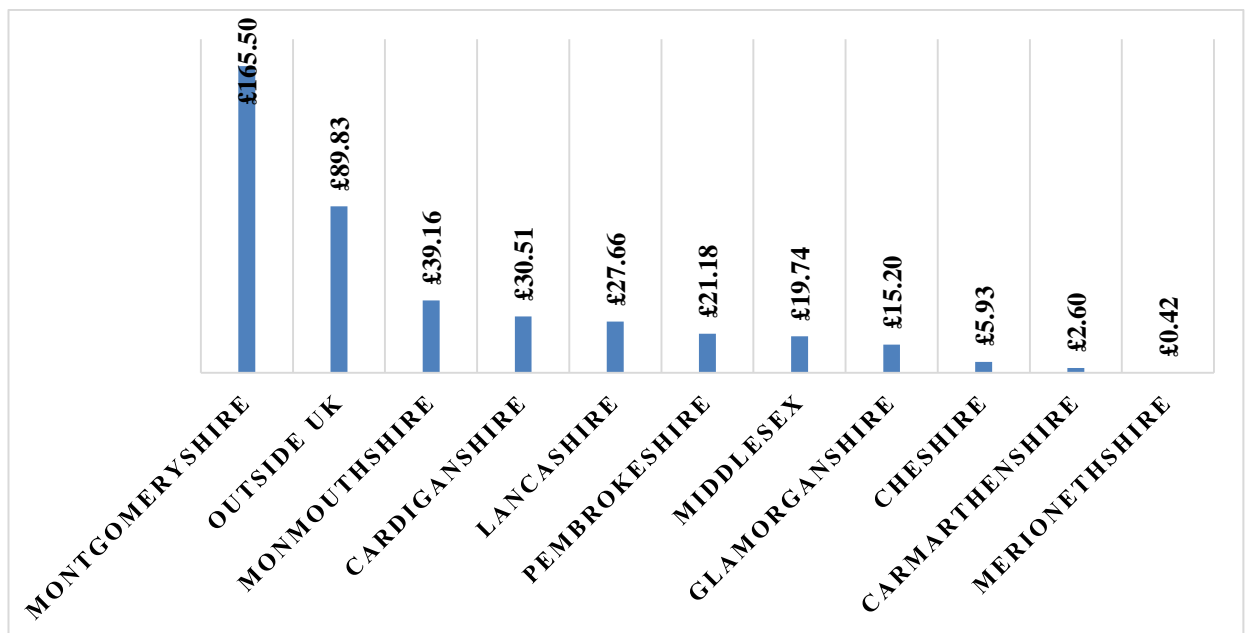
<sup>56</sup> NLW, GB 0210 MINDEPS, Minor Deposit 68-69a, Liverpool Welsh National Society, minute books, 1897-1938, Vol.2, Minutes of a Meeting of the Dinner Sub Committee, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1904.

performs well in both categories, with the aid of donations from local authorities, large subscriptions from high profile individuals and small amounts collected by town canvassers. In Cardiganshire the fundraising committee struck a balance between healthy financial amounts and subscriber engagement.





**Figure 3.2: Total number of subscriptions and subscribers, by county.**

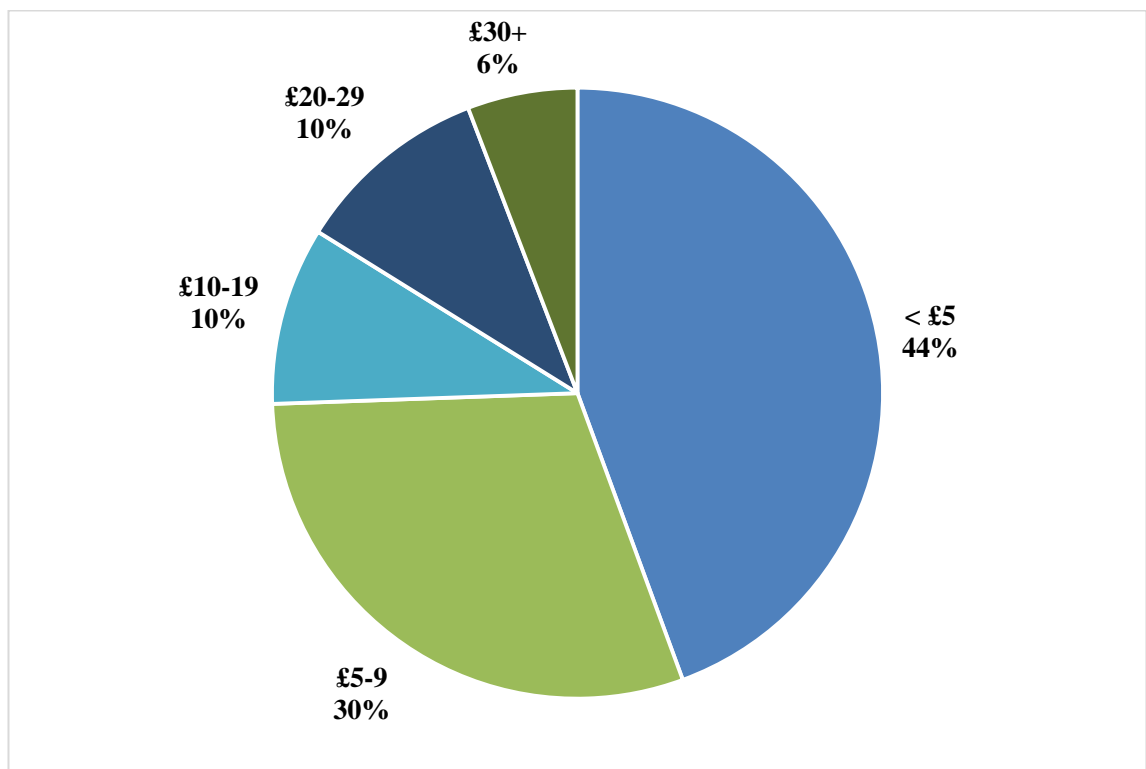


**Figure 3.3: Average subscription, by county.**

**NOTE:** This data (figures 3.2 and 3.3) includes the three largest donations from Aberystwyth Corporation £5,000, the Davies' of Llandinam £5,000 and Cardiganshire Council £2,000, therefore these amounts inflate Cardiganshire and Montgomeryshire's total subscriptions.

**Source:** *List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (National Library of Wales Press: Aberystwyth, 1910).

Of the Cardiganshire subscribers, 67% were residents in Aberystwyth. Figure 3.4 provides a breakdown of the town's pledges as a series of financial groupings. Of the Aberystwyth subscribers, 30% pledged between £5 and £9 and 44% of subscriptions were less than £5. The majority of this latter group pledged £1 1s. (£1.05) which was equivalent to one guinea. Contemporary newspaper advertisements indicate that one guinea would have bought approximately six chickens or a set of enamelled false teeth.<sup>57</sup> Out of those who gave less than £5, 33% were either shop or hospitality workers employed as drapers, grocers and victuallers.<sup>58</sup> Evidence of subscribers from these trade occupations indicates that in Aberystwyth individuals outside of academia and the professional classes were willing to give a reasonable sum to the building fund.



**Figure 3.4: Financial grouping of the Aberystwyth subscriptions - Total: £7620 11s. 10d. (£7620.59)**

**Source:** *List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (National Library of Wales Press: Aberystwyth, 1910)

<sup>57</sup> 'Pwllheli Wednesday's Market', *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1905 (Northern), p.8; 'For Fine Enamelled Teeth', *Evening Express*, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1905 (1<sup>st</sup> edition), p.2.

<sup>58</sup> Of the 99 subscribers who gave less than £5 16 individuals' professions could not be identified on the 1901 or 1911 census, so these percentages are based on the 83 whose professions are known.

The town of Aberystwyth and the surrounding area was an obvious priority for the funding committee, as it was a region that would potentially benefit the most from the building of the NLW. However, the campaign appeared to focus more on igniting feelings of patriotic pride rather than substantiating any concrete financial or cultural benefits for the people of Cardiganshire. One of the key fundraising tools used by the building fund committee was the appeal letter. It is clear from the records that not every potential subscriber received the same letter, as over a period of six months, from October 1904 to March 1905, nine different appeal letters were drafted.<sup>59</sup> The later letters use more emotive language as the deadline to submit the claim statements to the Privy Council committee neared. The draft letter from February 1905 tried to appeal to a potential subscriber's patriotic loyalty and specifically targeted residents of Aberystwyth.

The cause is one which is every Welshman and Welshwoman should be proud to support on the broad ground of love of country that unites us all. There is a special obligation in the case of inhabitants of the county of Cardigan and the district of Aberystwyth to contribute towards a Library which has to home [sic] in their midst.<sup>60</sup>

A bilingual pamphlet printed at the end of 1904 was specifically addressed 'To the Inhabitants of Aberystwyth and District' and informed the recipient 'that a public canvass of the Town and District on behalf of the Fund will shortly be made by Representatives of the Local Committee'.<sup>61</sup> The pamphlet goes on to stress that 'Aberystwyth should undertake its full share of the effort, so that other parts of the Principality may be stimulated by the good example. Trusting that on the broadest grounds of patriotism...you will generously respond when the Representatives of the

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<sup>59</sup> NLW, T1/2, 'List of persons appealed to on behalf of Welsh Library Building Fund, with copies of letters and subscription list', October 1904 – March 1905.

<sup>60</sup> NLW, T1/2, 'List of persons appealed to on behalf of Welsh Library Building Fund, with copies of letters and subscription list', October 1904 – March 1905, Letter D, February 1905, p.2.

<sup>61</sup> NLW Archive, G4/1, Building Fund: Subscriptions and donations towards various phases of the NLW's construction Apr 1905-1951, 'Welsh Library Building Fund Appeal Pamphlet -To the Inhabitants of Aberystwyth and District', December 1904.

Committee call upon you.’<sup>62</sup> There is evidence that representatives did blanket canvass Aberystwyth as the notebooks carried by the canvassers are held in the NLW archive. Each notebook contains information on the area covered, convenor and canvassers present, amounts pledged by each address and notes on if a person refused or was not home.<sup>63</sup> A list of addresses visited on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1905 reveals that canvassers methodically worked their way around Aberystwyth following up on the pamphlets previously distributed.<sup>64</sup> It is clear that the Aberystwyth campaign was organised and far-reaching, combining an appeal letter with a face-to-face house call. The language used in the appeal letter (and probably on the doorstep) aimed to evoke a sense of national identity which, in turn, would instil a sense of obligation to donate to the building fund, rather than emphasising any educational or financial benefits. It appears to have been a relatively successful part of the campaign, raising £3100 11s. 10d. (£3100.59) pledged by 329 subscribers across Cardiganshire.<sup>65</sup>

In March 1905 it was reported that committees to collect subscriptions had also been appointed in the towns of Aberayron, New Quay, Tregaron and Carmarthen.<sup>66</sup> In addition, a new canvassing letter was drafted which encouraged the recipient to ‘cooperate with other gentlemen in the town to form a Local Committee’.<sup>67</sup> These generic letters had spaces to enter the name of the town, the date of the next public meeting and the name of the designated canvasser. Similar to the letter sent out to Aberystwyth

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<sup>62</sup> G4/1, ‘Welsh Library Building Fund Appeal Pamphlet -To the Inhabitants of Aberystwyth and District’, December 1904.

<sup>63</sup> NLW Archives, T1/7, Cardiganshire Appeal: list of possible and actual subscribers to the original appeal 1905-32, ‘University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. Welsh Library Fund. Subscriptions promised in Ward II.’

<sup>64</sup> NLW, T1/7, ‘University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. Welsh Library Fund. Subscriptions promised in Ward II’, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1905.

<sup>65</sup> These figures do not include the subscriptions from Aberystwyth Corporation and Cardiganshire County Council and these were obtained through different methods.

<sup>66</sup> WLACM, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1905.

<sup>67</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of persons appealed to on behalf of Welsh Library Building Fund, with copies of letters and subscription list, Letter L, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1905, p.3.

residents, it concludes by emphasising that ‘[t]he cause is one which will appeal to you as deserving of the help of every patriotic Welshman.’<sup>68</sup>

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1905 the *Evening Express* reported that two public meetings were about to take place – one in Carmarthen and the other in Tregaron – in support of the library.<sup>69</sup> The Carmarthen meeting was held at the Guildhall with the appeal delivered by Sir John Williams. Williams’ speech at Carmarthen was widely reported in the press as it severely denigrated Cardiff and contentiously declared that London should continue to be the capital of Wales, rather than be awarded to Cardiff.<sup>70</sup> To conclude the meeting, Walter Spurrell, a printer and publisher, moved a resolution in favour of Aberystwyth, which was seconded by Pierce James Wheldon, a bank manager. A committee of twenty-five members was appointed to collect subscriptions, including Spurrell and Wheldon who played key roles in recruiting subscribers and collecting funds. The National Provincial Bank, managed by Wheldon, was designated as a place to pledge to the building fund. At the end of April 1905, Wheldon wrote to Principal Roberts to say that he had received £200 in promises, almost 80% of the total Carmarthen subscriptions, up to 1910.<sup>71</sup> Also in June 1905 Spurrell send a complete list of subscribers with addresses to the library committee, but indicated that some subscribers were in temporary accommodation.<sup>72</sup>

Carmarthen was a town that had a high level of participation in the fundraising campaign even though total subscriptions were relatively low. In Welsh towns the public meeting, usually held in a town hall, was an effective way of communicating to residents,

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<sup>68</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of persons appealed to on behalf of Welsh Library Building Fund, with copies of letters and subscription list, Letter L, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1905, p.3.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Carmarthen receives three applications’ and ‘Tregaron’s Support’, *Evening Express*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1905 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), p.4.

<sup>70</sup> ‘The Welsh National Library. Sir John Williams supports the claims of Aberystwith’, *The Welshman*, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1905, p.3.

<sup>71</sup> NLW, T1/2, Letters relating to subns and containing information which may prove to be useful, Letter from Pierce James Wheldon, Carmarthen to Principal Roberts, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1904.

<sup>72</sup> NLW, T1/2, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Letter from Walter Spurrell to Elizabeth Lloyd secretary of the Library Appeal Committee, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1906.

as, unlike the sprawling metropolis, the Welsh communities were relatively tight-knit, so much easier to target. Most residents would have known about these upcoming meetings and they were reasonably well attended. Also, as John Williams' speech demonstrates, the intention of many of the mid and north Wales local meetings was to re-awaken anti-Cardiff sentiments and in a sense many of the towns who supported Aberystwyth were united in a shared animosity towards the burgeoning, southern town.

In Tregaron two public meetings were scheduled to be held at the town hall: one in the last week of March and the other at the monthly market day in April.<sup>73</sup> The latter had to be moved outside to the town square 'owing to the difficulty to get farmers to attend because of the market'.<sup>74</sup> During this meeting it was proposed 'that a committee be formed of influential men in the district, to get promises of support for Aberystwyth', which was passed unanimously. Once again, key members of the library committee, such as Rev. Thomas Levi, and representatives from the local community, such as Dr Evan Lloyd, spoke at the meetings in favour of Aberystwyth.<sup>75</sup> By April 1905 the library committee were acutely aware of the importance of recruiting local representatives who would continue to raise subscriptions in their absence. The fundraising success found in towns, such as Carmarthen and Tregaron, was due to the appointment of a committee and key local individuals, who would fundraise and collect subscriptions.

In terms of amassing pledges – rather than actual financial contributions – the committee's campaign in the town of Ffestiniog was the most successful. However, as will be seen, the majority of these pledges were never fulfilled. In 1905 it was viewed as one of the great achievements of the campaign, but new research reveals that this initial enthusiasm never actually delivered a significant financial contribution.

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<sup>73</sup> 'Tregaron', *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.4.; 'Tregaron' *The Aberystwyth Observer*, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1905, p.2.

<sup>74</sup> 'Tregaron', *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.4.

<sup>75</sup> 'Tregaron' *The Aberystwyth Observer*, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1905, p.2.

The majority of these 744 individuals who subscribed to the building fund were listed under one entry of £70 18s. (£70.90), as individual donations were approximately 2s. each. These subscribers were quarrymen, likely working for the Oakeley Slate Quarries Company which ran one of the biggest underground slate quarry mines in Great Britain at Festiniog. Although 2s. is a seemingly small amount, particularly in comparison to other subscriptions to the building fund, its significance can only be measured when compared to a person's overall income. In 1895 the average worker's daily wage in a Merionethshire slate mine was 4s. 4d. and almost 20 years later, in 1914, it is almost the same amount, dropping slightly to 4s. 2d.<sup>76</sup> Therefore it can be presumed that when the subscriptions were promised between 1903 and 1905 the average pledge was equivalent to almost half a quarryman's daily wage.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1905 a public meeting was held in Blaenau Ffestiniog in support of Aberystwyth's claim to host the NLW, which the town council unanimously agreed to support. The speakers included three of the Aberystwyth campaign's most prominent members: Sir John Williams, Principal Roberts and Professor Edwards, with the chairman of the Urban District Council, William Owen, presiding. This public meeting is evidence that the library committee identified and targeted a specific geographical area and group of people who had previously subscribed to a national fund. William Owen highlighted 'the sacrifices made by the quarrymen of Festiniog towards founding the Aberystwyth College...he believed that Festiniog...would subscribe to the Aberystwyth Library Fund.'<sup>77</sup>

A resolution was moved binding the meeting to contribute to the fund and it was seconded by a quarryman, Mr W.W.Jones of Brynawl. The speakers had clearly chosen

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<sup>76</sup> House of Commons Sessional Paper, Clement Le Neve Foster, 'Report of the departmental committee upon Merionethshire slate mines', Vol.XXXV, 1895, p.115; R. Merfyn Jones, *The North Wales Quarrymen 1874-1922*, 1981 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, reprint 2015), p.311.

<sup>77</sup> 'The Welsh National Library. Festiniog Supports Aberystwyth', *Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser*, 20<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.8.

their words carefully to suit the occasion, with John Williams appealing to Welsh speaking Ffestiniog to 'do its part in supporting an Appeal on behalf of Welsh Wales.' He declared that Welshmen were now 'not ashamed of their own language' and that the London University had now been pushed to recognise Welsh as an academic subject, connecting the predominate language of the Ffestiniog people with a previously distant and separate academic community. Principal Roberts emphasised that the library had grown 'through the efforts of devoted workers from all parts of Wales' and then later described the library's future readers as 'fellow-workers without distinction between north and south'. Again, the reiteration of the term 'worker' in the context of both the industrial environment and that of the library was most likely an attempt to break down any barriers between these two spheres to encourage subscribers to sign up.<sup>78</sup>

A local committee was appointed to collect subscriptions 'with an estimate of the financial support' to be sent to the library committee by 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1905.<sup>79</sup> The committee had forty-five members who represented various aspects of the community, including doctors, vicars, JPs, quarrymen, a bank manager and Lord Newborough.<sup>80</sup> They only had three weeks to collect subscriptions so as many people as possible would have been needed, which may explain the size and diversity of the committee. On the 5<sup>th</sup> May it was reported that the committee had raised £180 from over nine hundred individual subscribers, with an anonymous resident quoted as saying that it showed 'that an essentially working class centre is anxious to have the National Library of Wales in the most central position possible.'<sup>81</sup>

Just over ten months later on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1906, the Aberystwyth College Governors held their half-yearly meeting in Blaenau Ffestiniog followed by a public

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<sup>78</sup> 'The Welsh National Library. Festiniog Supports Aberystwyth', 20<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.8.

<sup>79</sup> 'The Welsh National Library. Festiniog Supports Aberystwyth', 20<sup>th</sup> April 1905, p.8.

<sup>80</sup> 'The National Library. Festiniog for Aberystwyth.' *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, (Supplement), 21<sup>st</sup> April 1905, p.4.

<sup>81</sup> 'Blaenau Festiniog', *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1905, p.2.



meeting with the purpose of ‘thank[ing] the Festiniog people for the great interest they have taken in the National Library.’<sup>82</sup> It is clear from the Welsh library appeal committee minutes that the vast majority of the Ffestiniog pledges, at this point, were unpaid, so this meeting was more than likely an attempt to gently remind subscribers of their commitment.<sup>83</sup> The public meeting was again attended by John Williams, Principal Roberts and Professor Edwards.<sup>84</sup>

In a committee meeting in 1906, the lack of paid subscriptions from Ffestiniog was attributed to ‘the slackness of the slate trade’ and concluded that ‘the present was not a favourable time for proceeding with the matter.’<sup>85</sup> The Ffestiniog subscriptions continued to go unpaid and they were still listed as outstanding in December 1910.<sup>86</sup> On 7th August 1912 William Edwards Davies, who had been employed by the library to collect outstanding subscriptions, wrote to John Cadwaladr to try to organise a public meeting in Blaenau Ffestiniog in the September ‘to relight the fire’ and to try to collect the outstanding donations.<sup>87</sup> But by the 21<sup>st</sup> August a date had still not been set and, according to William Edwards Davies’ letter book, no other letters were written to Cadwaladr. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1913 it is recorded that of the £70 18s. (£70.90) subscribed by the quarrymen £68 19s. 8d. (£68.98) still remained unpaid.<sup>88</sup> In the most comprehensive list of subscribers to the building fund, published in 1924, the Ffestiniog donation is listed as £3 8s. 8d. (£3.43), just under 5% of the expected contribution.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Blaenau Festiniog’, *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1906, p.7.

<sup>83</sup> WLACM, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1905.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Blaenau Festiniog’, *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1906, p.7.

<sup>85</sup> WLACM, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1906.

<sup>86</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of Subscribers and Amounts 1910-24, *The National Library of Wales List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1910), p.23. This copy was annotated by W.E. Davies to indicate the outstanding subscription in December 1910.

<sup>87</sup> NLW, T1/2, Letter Book 1910-3, Letter to James Cadwaladr from W.E. Davies, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1912, p.241.

<sup>88</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of Subscribers and Amounts 1910-24, *The National Library of Wales List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1910), p.23. This copy has been annotated to indicate the arrears on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1913.

<sup>89</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of Subscribers and Amounts 1910-24, *The National Library of Wales List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1923* (Aberystwyth: Printed at the Library, 1924), p.14.

The appeal committee's problems with collecting subscriptions were very similar to the issues that Hugh Owen had faced while trying to gather subscriptions made to the UCW fund. Edward Lewis Ellis observed that '[t]here was almost a disheartening disparity between the promises made in the flush of patriotic enthusiasm generated at the meeting and the moneys actually handed over in the more cautious light of day.'<sup>90</sup> The minutes of the appeal committee meeting held in June 1905 record the congratulations received from the Higher Education Committee on the location of the NLW at Aberystwyth, but the committee are then quick to focus on the swift collection of the promised subscriptions.

The principal donors were to be contacted to discover 'at what time they will pay their instalments' and a plan formulated on how to collect the smaller donations in places such as Carmarthen, Ffestiniog and London.<sup>91</sup> To resolve this matter a person was assigned to each area to facilitate the process by either appointing a collector (such as Ffestiniog's John Cadwalladr or Chester's Owen Rowland Jones) or appealing to the secretaries of the relevant local committees, this included the towns of Aberystwyth, Machynlleth, Ffestiniog and Chester.<sup>92</sup> This was followed by a discussion of the mounting of a fresh appeal targeting 'those people who were previously unwilling to subscribe until the decision of the Privy Council was made known.'<sup>93</sup> In the final recorded meeting of the appeal committee – held almost exactly a year later in October 1906 – the actual collections and outstanding subscriptions were discussed. The amounts received by this date were about £6048, but it is also declared that nearly £9000 was still outstanding. In a discussion on the subscriptions from the various towns, it was concluded that in Carmarthen and Chester most subscriptions had been collected, but in London, Machynlleth and Ffestiniog the majority were still outstanding. It was therefore proposed

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<sup>90</sup> Ellis, *The University College of Wales*, p.20.

<sup>91</sup> WLACM, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1905.

<sup>92</sup> WLACM, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1905.

<sup>93</sup> WLACM, 27<sup>th</sup> October 1905.

by Principal Roberts that notices be sent out to remind other subscribers of their debts.<sup>94</sup>

It was clear to the committee that a pledge did not necessarily mean that a financial contribution would be forthcoming, and that much work would have to be done in order to facilitate the collection process.

#### **IV. The Latter Stages of the Appeal**

Between May 1905 when the list of subscribers was published to submit with the Aberystwyth claim and 1910 when a second list of subscribers was published, the building fund only increased by £3604 17s. 3d. (£3604.86). This was a relatively small rise and included a substantial donation of £2000 from Cardiganshire Council.<sup>95</sup> During this time the committee were trying to collect previously pledged subscriptions and the focus moved from fundraising to setting up a temporary NLW at the Assembly Rooms in Aberystwyth, which opened in 1909. However, there is evidence of a renewed sense of urgency to collect subscriptions in the correspondence from early 1913. On the 6<sup>th</sup> March a blanket letter was sent out signed by John Williams and John Ballinger which stated that

[a]s you have not yet replied to our circular of the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, we venture to point out that we have to make a return to the Treasury on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. showing the subscriptions paid to that date. Will you kindly reply to this letter stating whether it is your intention to pay your promised subscription?<sup>96</sup>

The Treasury's demands suggest that they were aware of how easy it was to amass pledges over the collection of actual contributions. Once more, an instruction from the British government had been the motivation behind the committee's communication with

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<sup>94</sup> WLACM, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1906.

<sup>95</sup> NLW, T1/2, List of Subscribers and Amounts 1910-24, *University College of Wales. Welsh Library Building Fund List of Subscribers* (Aberystwyth, 1905) Published for the Aberystwyth Claim made to the Privy Council committee 1<sup>st</sup> May 1905, labelled exhibit N. Total subscriptions on this date £17,214 8s. 3d. (£17,214.41).

<sup>96</sup> NLW, T1/1, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Letter from John Williams and John Ballinger to subscribers to the building fund who had not yet paid, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1913.

the library's wider audience, as the committee now had to demonstrate that the mass support for the NLW to be built in Aberystwyth was genuine, and not an inflation of the figures to secure a victory. Also, the government had been reluctant to financially support a NLW in 1905 and were likely fearful of being saddled with further costs now the building was being constructed.

By 1913, subscriptions pledged as early as 1905 were still outstanding and the likelihood of the library committee receiving them decreased as subscribers' circumstances changed. John H. Jones, one of the dairymen from London, sent back the letter from Williams and Ballinger with an angry message on the reverse to say that he could not pay due to death and illness in the family, which he had already communicated to the committee.<sup>97</sup> However, it appears to have pressured some subscribers into paying, as a receipt from August 1913, addressed to Ballinger from the National Provincial Bank in Aberystwyth, indicates that £12 18s (£12.90) had been paid into the building fund account.<sup>98</sup> This suggests that the library committee was right to continue to pursue subscribers and that the appetite for a NLW built in Aberystwyth had not entirely diminished.

There is correspondence which suggests that the NLW continued to collect outstanding subscriptions after the First World War had begun. Two letters indicate a collection drive by the NLW as late as April 1916: one from an A.R. Pryce from Dublin to Hugh Lewis in Newtown (one of the governors of the NLW) to say that he would send his donation of £20 10s. (£20.50), but that, at present, all available funds should go towards the war, and the second is from Robert Northey in Ohio to say that he would pay his subscription, but living costs had increased significantly since the conflict had

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<sup>97</sup> NLW, T1/1, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Letter from John H Jones written on the back of a blanket letter sent out on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1913 by the NLW signed by John Williams and John Ballinger, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1913.

<sup>98</sup> NLW, T1/1, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Receipt from the National Provincial Bank, Aberystwyth to John Ballinger, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1913.

begun.<sup>99</sup> The continuation of subscription collection into wartime reveals how short of money the library must have been at this time, following the cutting of their government grant from £4,000 per annum to £3,200.<sup>100</sup> Also, from April 1915, the temporary library was closed while the books were moved to the partially constructed new building on the hill. Although several subscribers thought it inappropriate for the library to have requested money during wartime, it had unfortunately coincided with the library's transition from temporary service to permanent reality.

Post-1910, the library's fundraising tactics became more precise, as much had been learnt from the 1905 campaign. The honing of these techniques can be seen in a planned fundraising drive in Birmingham during 1911 which is summarised in a document titled 'Birmingham. Notes as to Canvass.' Welsh societies such as Undeb y Brythoniad ('The British Language Union') are listed along with the names of their officers and membership numbers, as are Birmingham residents who had contributed to the library's opening reception fund. A lecture given by John Ballinger in the city was planned for the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1911. There are lists of Welsh churches and ministers in the Birmingham area, information on Welsh born vicars and ministers and parishioner numbers. This campaign also aimed to target possible subscribers outside of Welsh circles: '[t]he manufacturers of Birmingham who must do a large trade in Wales e.g. jewellers, nail Makers, electro plate.'<sup>101</sup> This planned canvassing of Birmingham shows the techniques the library thought were the most effective. A lecture or speech given by key members of the library campaign had often bolstered subscriptions in a particular area, for example in London and Manchester. The targeting of Welsh societies and non-conformist churches gave the campaign an efficient way of accessing the wider Welsh

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<sup>99</sup> NLW, T1/1, Collection of Letters 1904-16, Letter from A R Pryce, Dublin to Hugh Lewis, Newtown, 12<sup>th</sup> April 1916 and a letter from Robert Northey, Ohio to John Ballinger, 24<sup>th</sup> April 1916.

<sup>100</sup> NLW (South Reading Room, Open Shelves), National Library of Wales Annual Reports 1909-1924/5, Librarian's half-yearly report to the Court of Governors, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1915.

<sup>101</sup> NLW, T1/2, Draft and Circular Letters relating to the building fund 1905-14, handwritten list titled 'Birmingham. Notes as to Canvass', 1911.

community in a given area, but by researching ministers' backgrounds and estimating congregation numbers the library aimed to maximise its chances of securing as many subscriptions as possible.

Similarly to the earlier campaign strategy, the library continued with a two-pronged approach which aimed to secure large donations from a few key wealthy individuals while, at the same time, engaging with the masses, in an attempt to secure widespread support across Wales. By this point the library was developing an initiative which would directly benefit the masses who lived beyond Aberystwyth and could not access the library directly. It was a book box loan scheme – examined in detail in chapter five – which enabled adult educational classes across Wales to borrow duplicate copies of printed books from the NLW catalogue. The scheme was devised in conjunction with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and was rolled out in early 1914.

An example of the scheme being used to attract further contributions occurred in April 1910. A 'humble petition' was sent to the 'masters, wardens and court assistants of the Worshipful Company of Leather Sellers' asking for subscriptions. The petition reminded the group that it had 'associated itself by many generous gifts...with the great movement for higher education' and provided information on the embryonic book box scheme while also alluding to the pledges made by the quarrymen of Ffestiniog and the teachers of Cardiganshire.<sup>102</sup>

The WEA book box scheme finally gave the library a concrete proposal that would directly impact the wider community in Wales, rather than just attempting to ignite a worker's sense of national pride to generate subscriptions. The WEA's chairman in Wales was Daniel Lleufer Thomas who was a NLW council member and key fundraiser. In early 1914 Thomas persuaded the South Wales Miners' Federation to support the national library and he would discuss the book box scheme with the workers whose meetings he

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<sup>102</sup> NLW, T1/2, Draft and Circular Letters relating to the building fund 1905-14, Petition addressed to the Worshipful Company of Leather Sellers, 12<sup>th</sup> April 1910.

attended in order to raise more funds. He was reported to state that the council were ‘evolving a new and thoroughly democratic conception of the function of a national library...the Welsh library is going to lend them works – standard, expensive and up-to-date – to enable them to carry on their studies by their own firesides.’<sup>103</sup> Thomas’ South Wales campaign was extremely effective and raised over £8,000 for the building fund, suggesting that the duplicates scheme may have encouraged more workers to pledge.<sup>104</sup>

In tandem with targeting workers, the library committee was still aware that many affluent London Welshmen had not subscribed to the building fund, so a new approach was suggested. Women connected to the London Welsh would be encouraged to form a committee so they ‘might be able to enlist wives of wealthy Welshmen in London who are at present standing aloof’.<sup>105</sup> It was also suggested that they could canvass their friends outside of the Welsh community and even beyond London. Thus far, the committee had predominantly targeted potential subscribers within the public realm: their place of work, worship and associated societies. Now there was an attempt to penetrate the private realm, such as the home and groups of close friends. Until this point, women had only played a minor role in the NLW’s evolution, as they only represented approximately 5-7% of the individual subscribers (1905-10) to the NLW building fund.<sup>106</sup> The targeting of this group, potentially indicates an increased awareness by the library of women’s interest in educational institutions. In addition, from 1909 when the reading room opened until the middle of 1912, 14% of the readers were women, which may have alerted the library to their potential as fundraisers.

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<sup>103</sup> ‘Swansea and the National Library’, *The Cambrian Daily Leader*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1914, p.4.

<sup>104</sup> ‘The Welsh National Library’, *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1914, p.5. NLW, T1/2, List of Subscribers and Amounts 1910-24, *The National Library of Wales List of Subscribers towards the Building Fund to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1923* (Aberystwyth: Printed at the Library, 1924)

<sup>105</sup> NLW, T1/2, Draft and Circular Letters relating to the building fund 1905-14, handwritten note titled ‘canvass for subscriptions’, No date, but likely post-1911 due to content.

<sup>106</sup> This estimate includes the number of individual women who subscribed to the building fund and women who were included in joint subscriptions, either as wives or daughters.

A subscriber's reason for giving to the library can be difficult to ascertain, but one indicator can be whether an individual then went on to use the library once it opened. Of the 281 readers who have been identified (there are 364 readers altogether) who used the library's temporary reading room at the Assembly Rooms between April 1909 – August 1912, thirty of those can also be pinpointed as subscribers to the library building fund. In total this group pledged £901 4s. (£901.20) (of which £705 was given by John Williams, John Gwenogvryn Evans and John Herbert Lewis), representing 4.3% of the overall subscriptions total, published in 1910. Although 374 readers were already a relatively small group it is startling that only thirty had pledged to the building fund and that 78% of that total was given by three members of the council.<sup>107</sup> Of the identified readers, 27% were students, so it may be the case that their low incomes prevented them from pledging, but there is still a sizable group who had occupations which would have received a reasonable salary.<sup>108</sup> These results could suggest that a person's motivation for subscribing was more closely linked to a sense of patriotic pride, than associated with a desire to develop an educational service that would be of direct personal benefit. This theory is also borne out in the promotional fundraising materials produced by the committee which prioritised a strategy to provoke a sense of national identity and duty, rather than focus on the educational value or specific facilities of a national library service. It was only in the latter stages of the campaign that fundraisers focused more on the personal value that a subscriber could glean from the library.

## **V. Conclusion**

It is clear that the library fundraising drive was stimulated and framed by the stipulations of the Westminster museum grants proposal as it would have been far easier for the library

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<sup>107</sup> It may be the case that the number of readers who subscribed could be slightly more than 30, as I have only included readers/subscribers who could definitely be identified and matched.

<sup>108</sup> Out of 364 readers the professions of 70 cannot be identified. Therefore the percentage calculations are based on the 294 that have been identified. For example, 70 out of 294 readers are students which is equivalent to 27%.



committee to just target wealthy philanthropists – many living outside of Wales – in order to raise the £20,000 stipulated by the Treasury. But Westminster had insisted the campaign demonstrate local and widespread financial support, mainly so they would have to contribute as little financial assistance as possible. Therefore, the perceived notion that the inclusivity of the national library campaign was primarily motivated by a desire to create a truly all-encompassing national institution for the people of Wales comes under scrutiny.

There is little evidence of a mass movement lobbying for a national library at the time it was brought before the House of Commons in 1903, instead, a small group of cultural and political elites appear to be the driving force behind the campaign. Although small, as a group, they had a vast array of social networks and contacts which enabled the appeal committee to access Welsh communities across Great Britain and key individuals abroad with speed and precision.

As requested by the Treasury, the committee gathered hundreds of smaller pledges to demonstrate mass participation whilst securing the major subscriptions to boost the coffers. The important point to emphasise is that this participation from all levels of society was orchestrated for a particular end, and is not an example of an unprovoked swelling of national feeling in support of Wales' cultural institutions. This is not to suggest that individuals did not feel a genuine desire to contribute to this cause once they were informed, but they were deliberately targeted and, in most cases, the fundraising tactics had been tailored to suit the audience.

Although the number of subscribers outside of Wales was far fewer than from within, this group gave far larger single donations. The total from outside of Wales equates to 14% of the total building fund in 1910. Although the other 86% came from inside Wales, over half of this total is made up of three donations, from the Davies family, Aberystwyth Corporation and Cardiganshire Council. Therefore the impact of the

subscriptions from outside of Wales is actually more significant than may appear at first glance. However, although many of these subscribers in Wales pledged small amounts, it demonstrated clearly to the Privy Council committee that Aberystwyth had mass support, particularly from the three mid-west counties of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire and Merionethshire.

Many of the original pledges were not honoured which was also an issue for the earlier UCW campaign. It may be the case, as Edward Lloyd Ellis implied in relation to the UCW, that ‘the flush of patriotic enthusiasm’, which the library appeal committee deliberately aimed to provoke, was effective in the moment, but faded quickly thereafter. Perhaps if the campaign had focused more on the library as an educational facility, which offered opportunity for self-improvement, more of the subscriptions may have been fulfilled. Indeed, the development of the duplicates book box scheme from 1912, by Ballinger and others, gave the later campaign an educational service that had mass appeal.

In conclusion, perhaps rather than just questioning why a person pledged to the building fund it is important to ask why they then went on to honour that pledge, and if they did not what may have changed. As has been demonstrated, sometimes a person did not fulfil their subscription because of personal circumstances or international events. However, it appears that the patriotic call to arms by the library appeal committee caused the desired surge of support required by the Treasury, but that the reality of actually building the NLW, long after the Privy Council committee’s decision, required a more robust demonstration of how the library would impact on the Welsh nation.

## **Chapter Four: Early Workings of the National Library of Wales 1907-1916**

After Aberystwyth was awarded the National Library of Wales (NLW) in 1905 it was then established by Royal Charter in March 1907 and in the November of that year the first court of governors' meeting was held. In 1909 the NLW's mission statement was fully outlined in a *Charter of Incorporation* which highlighted the role the library would play in collecting and preserving a wide selection of printed materials (and art works) composed in Welsh or any other Celtic language which would provide opportunities for education in all branches of science and art. Subject areas covered would include the antiquities, language, literature, philology, history, religion, arts, crafts, and industries of the Welsh or other Celtic peoples.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter considers the library's first ten years as an operational institution from 1907 and interrogates if those involved with the library adhered to or deviated from the mission statement. It presents a detailed analysis of the library's early collection policy which demonstrates how influential the backgrounds and interests of key individuals were on the library's initial development. It appears that certain subject areas such as religion, history and literature were prioritised whereas science, agriculture and technology were, generally, overlooked. This discrepancy was likely the result of an overrepresentation from certain academic fields and the complete absence of others.

A detailed review of the membership and attendance levels of the court and council reveals that on the surface the library appeared to be engaging with a range of different constituencies, but in reality these were, on the whole, symbolic appointments. Instead, an elite group based, mainly, in Aberystwyth and connected to academia made the majority of the decisions. This influential group were in stark contrast to the vast and diverse demographic who had engaged with the fundraising campaign. Initially, it appears

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<sup>1</sup> *The National Library of Wales Charter of Incorporation and report on the progress of the library. From the Granting of the Charter to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1909* (Oswestry: Woodall, Minshall, Thomas & Co., Caxton Press, 1909), pp.5-6.

that the library committee had little interest in engaging with a wider demographic, but the introduction of the book box scheme, championed by John Ballinger, sought to cater for this group in a more practical sense.

This chapter demonstrates that the conception of ‘Wales’ employed by those running the library in the early years was primarily rooted in a historical context and championed a heritage of Welsh literature and non-conformity, but failed to engage with the scientific and technological advances of the nineteenth century. The purchasing policy is evidence that political and cultural elites were seeking to (re)imagine a particular version of Welsh national identity which reflected the concept of Wales propagated by the eighteenth-century cultural revival. Items donated by the public are not examined here as this chapter is concerned with the library’s deliberate selection of material, be it within the confines of the open market.<sup>2</sup>

Part I of this chapter outlines the composition, function and influence of the court, council and books committee. Parts II and III analyse the library’s purchasing practices in the manuscript (MS) and printed book departments. Part II also considers the role committee members played in decision-making and how their personal interests may have influenced what was purchased and what was not. Part III summarises the Copyright Act of 1911 and how this affected the purchasing of printed books post-1912. This section also presents a broad analysis of the printed books which were purchased, after copyright status was granted, to determine how the library shaped the printed books collection by way of procurement.

### **I. The Court, the Council and the Books Committee**

John Williams and John Herbert Lewis were appointed president and vice-president of the first court of governors, respectively. These appointments were unsurprising, given

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<sup>2</sup> Donated items are only discussed if the existence of an item(s) in the collection affects a purchasing decision.

that Williams had been an active member of the campaign group since 1897 and was responsible for the extensive core collection of the NLW, and Lewis had campaigned tirelessly from the early 1890s for a library and museum for Wales. The solicitor and antiquarian Henry Owen of Poyston was appointed Treasurer. Owen was another long-serving member of the campaign committee and had donated £110 to the building fund, making his contribution the eighth largest donation from an individual, up until 1910. These appointments were in recognition of the men's dedication to the cause and most likely their pledges to donate their expansive personal libraries to the NLW.

From the beginning the court of governors was sizable, with a membership of seventy-nine, but this was mainly due to the library co-opting members from various regions and institutions, in an attempt to represent different facets of Wales beyond the town and university of Aberystwyth.<sup>3</sup> There were representatives from the academic and political sectors, all of the county councils, as well as several individuals from city and borough councils. However attendance at court meetings was generally low. During the period 1911-12 court attendance was at 22% which fell the following year to 16%. The first court of governors' list suggests that the library engaged with a range of constituencies across Wales but the attendance at court meetings was so low that, in reality, many of these appointments were more symbolic than functional.

The day-to-day running of the library was managed by the council. Below, Table 4.1 contains the name, position on the council, date of birth, university attended and profession of each of the twenty-two members.

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<sup>3</sup> *The NLW Charter of Incorporation*, pp.59-61.

<b>MEMBERS OF THE FIRST NLW COUNCIL</b>	<b>POSITION OR APPOINTED BY</b>	<b>DOB</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY ATTENDED</b>	<b>PROFESSION</b>
JOHN WILLIAMS	PRESIDENT	1840	GLASGOW, LONDON COLL. HOSPITAL	PHYSICIAN
JOHN HERBERT LEWIS	VICE-PRESIDENT	1859	MONTREAL, OXFORD	LAWYER, MP
HENRY OWEN	TREASURER	1844	OXFORD	SOLICITOR, ANTIQUARIAN
STUART RENDEL	PRIVY COUNCIL	1834	OXFORD	INDUSTRIALIST, MP
JOHN FISHER	PRIVY COUNCIL	1862	LAMPETER	CLERGYMAN, LIBRARIAN
JOHN GWENOGVRYN EVANS	PRIVY COUNCIL	1852	PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, CARMARTHEN	PALAEOPHAGER
EDWARD ANWYL	COURT	1866	OXFORD	PROFESSOR OF WELSH
JOSEPH BRADNEY	COURT	1859	CAMBRIDGE	ARMY CAPTAIN, HISTORIAN
DAVID DAVIES	COURT	1880	CAMBRIDGE	MP
JOHN HUMPHREYS DAVIES	COURT	1872	UCL, OXFORD ABERYSTWYTH	BIBLIOGRAPHER, EDUCATIONALIST
WALTER G. DODD	COURT	1861	?	PRIVATE MEANS

SAMUEL T. EVANS	COURT	1859	ABERYSTWYTH	JUDGE, MP
DAVID LLOYD GEORGE	COURT	1863	NONE	MP
EVAN D. JONES	COURT	1859	BRISTOL	CIVIL ENGINEER
JOHN MORRIS JONES	COURT	1865	OXFORD	PROFESSOR OF WELSH
JOHN EDWARD LLOYD	COURT	1862	ABERYSTWYTH OXFORD	HISTORIAN
JOHN RHYS	COURT	1840	NORMAL COLLEGE BANGOR, OXFORD	CELTIC SCHOLAR
DAVID CHARLES ROBERTS	COURT	1860	?	TIMBER MERCHANT
THOMAS FRANCIS ROBERTS	COURT	1861	ABERYSTWYTH, OXFORD	PRINCIPAL UCW
DANIEL LLEUFER THOMAS	COURT	1863	OXFORD	STIPENDARY MAGISTRATE
T. MERCHANT WILLIAMS	COURT	1845	NORMAL COLLEGE BANGOR, ABERYSTWYTH	BARRISTER
PETER JONES	ABERYSTWYTH CORPORATION	1848	?	SLATE MANUFACTURER, JP

**Table 4.1: Members of the first National Library of Wales council**

**Source:** Information for this table was taken from a variety of sources: *The NLW Charter of Incorporation*, p.62; Welsh Biography Online; Welsh Newspapers Online.



Seven members of this council had attended the first meeting of the Welsh library committee, held in 1896, which reveals the continuity of personnel during the ten year library campaign. Five of these original seven had been members of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society at Oxford and the new council contained two more members from that society: John Rhys (the president) and John Morris Jones, a Celtic scholar. The men who had joined the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society as students in the mid-1880s were still relatively young when the Welsh library committee was founded in 1896. Wil Griffith affirms ‘that it is from among these students that a cadre of Welsh leaders and social administrators emerged: a cadre which was very different from the traditional gentry and clergy.’<sup>4</sup> By 1907 the majority of these men were in their forties and had secured influential positions in academia and were often heavily involved in various Welsh cultural societies.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, they were a group who were attempting to position the history of Wales, its literature and the Welsh language at the centre of a cultural revival.

Even within this already select group certain areas were over-represented whilst others were completely absent. For example, all of the five academic staff on the council worked in the departments of language and literature or history. Other members such as Sir John Williams (a trained doctor) were interested in the collection of early Welsh literature and John Humphrey Davies was drawn to the work of the early Welsh poets. Joseph Alfred Bradney was a captain in the army, but his passion was Monmouthshire history, and he published several volumes on the subject and John Gwenogvryn Evans was the Inspector of Welsh Manuscripts for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Several council members had made their fortunes in industry, engineering and

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<sup>4</sup> Wil Griffith, ‘Devolutionist Tendencies in Wales, 1885-1914’ in Duncan Tanner, Chris Williams, Wil Griffith and Andrew Edwards (eds.), *Debating nationhood and governance in Britain, 1885-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp.89-117, p.93.

<sup>5</sup> For example John Fisher was a member of the Cambrian Archaeological Society, Edward Anwyl was a member of the Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments, John Morris Jones was the chairman of the language and literature committee of the University of Wales’ Board of Celtic Studies and Sir Thomas Merchant Williams was involved with the revival of the Cymmrodorion Society.

manufacturing, but they were not connected to these subjects in an educational sense, and had often moved on to a career in politics or held honorary positions at universities.

The books committee had seven members up to the end of 1916. Of the seven, the most frequent attendees were university registrar John Humphreys Davies, Alderman David Charles Roberts, Professor Edward Edwards (professor of history and vice-principal at the University College of Wales (UCW)) and Principal Thomas Francis Roberts. Sir John Williams, Professor Edward Anwyl and Alderman Peter Jones attended sporadically.

John Humphreys Davies attended all but one of the nineteen meetings of the books committee, over the four year period, and was the most frequent attendee of the group. Davies was a native of Cardiganshire and attended the universities of Aberystwyth and Oxford. His interest in Welsh literature was piqued at Oxford and he was a member of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society. He became High Sherriff for the county of Cardiganshire and was treasurer of the General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodist connexion. He held the non-academic post of registrar at the UCW and went on to be principal in 1919.<sup>6</sup> He collected Welsh books and MSS (his library was named Cwrtmawr, later donated to the NLW) and he also wrote a number of volumes himself. Primarily, he wrote about poets from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Morgan Llwyd and the Morris brothers of Anglesey. He contributed regularly to the Welsh Methodist Society's journal and edited the *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, 1910-1920. Davies is a good example of a typical library council/committee member with a university connection, membership of several Welsh cultural societies, an active non-conformist with an interest in eighteenth-century Welsh history and literature. His high level of attendance – particularly at book committee meetings which had a small number of

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<sup>6</sup> WBO, 'John Humphreys Davies' (1871-1926), accessed 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

participants – meant that he was potentially one of the most influential members of the group.

The arts were well represented on the NLW's council and book committee, but science was not, even though the library's mission statement explicitly pledged to grant the Welsh people 'greater facilities and opportunities for education in all branches of science and art'. Furthermore the UCW at Aberystwyth offered courses in the sciences and agriculture, so there were staff members who potentially could have been co-opted onto the council or books committee. This lack of representation may have led to an absence of significant purchases relating to these key subject areas. The innate bias of these committees who wielded much power within the NLW concurs with the theory of the cultural modernists Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger that 'the history which became...the ideology of the nation...is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.'<sup>7</sup>

The librarian John Ballinger acted in an advisory role to the council and books committee. He provided information on what was available to purchase and made recommendations. It is clear from his own writings and speeches that he was keen to collect ephemeral publications: '[t]he report of a church or chapel, of a football, hockey or golf club, the rules of a trade, benefit or friendly society, the programme of a concert or an eisteddfod, and similar publications may individually only be of temporary value, but collected together and classified, they will some day have a priceless value.'<sup>8</sup> John Herbert Lewis was also an advocate for collecting these types of material and encouraged the public to donate them as '[t]hey contain information of inestimable value for the

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1-14, p.13.

<sup>8</sup> John Ballinger, 'The National Library of Wales in Relation to Other Institutions', *The Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, Vol.1, No.2 (1911), pp.33-42, p.40.

historian.’<sup>9</sup> Certainly Ballinger’s influence can be identified in the purchasing decisions made during this period.

## **II. Library Purchases: manuscripts and larger items 1909-1916**

Before October 1912 purchasing decisions were made by the council or decided by Williams and Ballinger outside of official meetings, during this period approximately ninety items were bought.<sup>10</sup> From October 1912 the separate books committee was established which then made the majority of the decisions concerning key purchases. During this period, up to 1916, approximately thirty-seven items were bought. Fewer were purchased in the latter phase, but this was primarily the result of the budget cuts the library sustained leading up to the outbreak of the First World War. Over this seven year period fourteen other items were discussed but were not purchased.<sup>11</sup> This section analyses these purchasing decisions with a view to identifying the influence of key individuals and to further explore the library’s perception of ‘Wales’ during this period.

Some library purchases were likely made in reaction to what was available on the market, but Ballinger was also proactive and sought out particular types of material to purchase. For example in 1909 he wrote to a seller in Gravesend in Kent asking if he could be informed when all topographical prints and portraits of Wales came up for sale.<sup>12</sup> He also wrote to the book dealers Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles to notify them that Hodgson's were selling several books dealing with the history of Baptists in America. Ballinger asked if they would view the books and advise him on their value and concluded by stating that ‘these are of interest to us as Welshmen were largely the founders of these

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<sup>9</sup> John Herbert Lewis, ‘On the importance of a national collection of public documents’, *The Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, Vol.1, No.4 (1912), pp.97-113, p.107.

<sup>10</sup> NLW Archives, B3, Council Minutes of Meetings, 1908-1912; *The National Library of Wales Report of the Council on the Progress of the Library from April 1909 to September 1910* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1911); *The National Library of Wales Report of the Council on the Progress of the Library from October 1910 to October 1913* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1913).

<sup>11</sup> There are also five items where it is unclear whether they were purchased or not. These are not represented in the figures.

<sup>12</sup> NLW Archive, J1/58, National Library of Wales Letter Book 1, No. 206, Letter from Ballinger to Mr. A. Ridgeway, Gravesend, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1909.

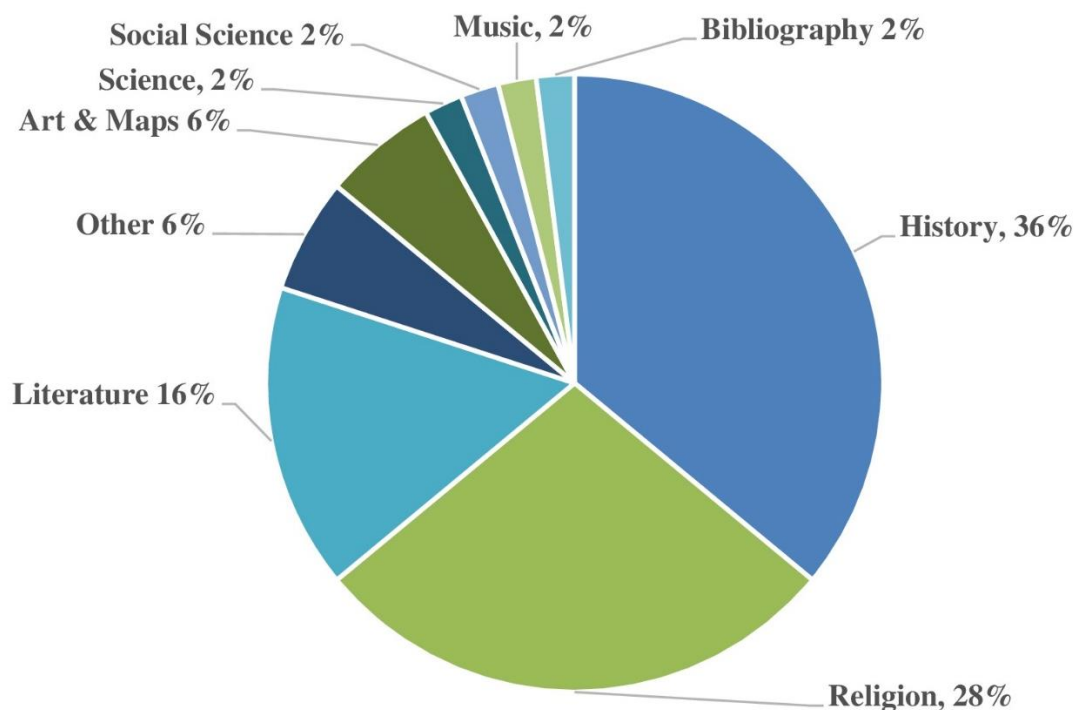
churches.<sup>13</sup> The list of available books and MSS discussed and decided upon by the council or books committee was a result of Ballinger's investigations into what was available on the open market, but this research was likely driven by his own particular interests.

The purchases for this period have been categorised and illustrated below, in figure 4.1. The three subject areas that contain the most purchases were history, religion, and literature. Of these items 78% were written in a Celtic language or related to the Celtic people, the vast majority being in Welsh or connected to Wales. The subjects largely absent are music and science. The library may not have felt the need to purchase many music MSS because John Williams' donated library contained a collection of music.<sup>14</sup> As discussed, the dearth of scientific MSS may be the result of a lack of representatives on the council from the discipline of science. Also the appointed council members who determined the library's buying policy were, in the main, focused on recording and promoting Welsh cultural identity. Possibly their conception of Wales left little room for subjects like science which did not fit an agrarian, religious and literary model of the nation.

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<sup>13</sup> J1/58 Letter Book 1, No.230, Letter from Ballinger to Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles, London, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1909.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the development of the NLW's music archive see Andrew Cusworth, 'Towards a Digital Land of Song: a digital approach to the archival record of Welsh traditional music, its performance and its reception', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Open University, Milton Keynes, 2015.



**Figure 4.1: Categorisation of the MSS and larger items purchased by the NLW, 1909-1916<sup>15</sup>**

**Sources:** NLW Archive, A3, Court of Governors Minutes 1907-1916; NLW Archives, B3, Council Minutes of Meetings 1908-1916; *The National Library of Wales Report of the Council on the Progress of the Library from April 1909 to September 1910* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1911); *The National Library of Wales Report of the Council on the Progress of the Library from October 1910 to October 1913* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1913); NLW Archive, D1/4, Books Sub-Committee Minutes 1912-1916.

<sup>15</sup> Some library purchases contained multiple items but were listed under one heading e.g. Ty Coch library, which means they are counted as one item. It would be very difficult to categorise all the individual pieces of these collections and, in any case, it appears that a collection would very often follow a theme e.g. genealogical, religious. Therefore my statistical data can only give a general impression of the types of material the library purchased, but I think it is sufficient enough to be able to determine patterns and variations.

### **a. History**

The purchased items relating to history are an eclectic range and focus predominantly on the social history of Wales, rather than major historical events and are often items that would be defined as ephemeral materials. Ballinger and John Herbert Lewis were keen to collect items that documented the different facets of Welsh society, looking beyond the valuable MSS and books included in the larger collections such as those of John Williams. In an address given to the Welsh Bibliographical Society by Ballinger in 1910 he discussed 'ephemeral publications' which may be of limited interest individually, but '[i]f carefully collected...and arranged under subjects, or topographically...the flotsam and jetsam of to-day will be the gold-dust of the future.'<sup>16</sup>

Ballinger had an interest in collecting ephemeral publications before becoming the librarian at the NLW. During his celebrated 1904 Welsh Bible Exhibition at Cardiff Free Library, where he was head librarian, he emphasised to visitors that it was 'always wise before destroying old pamphlets, &c., however worthless they seem, to inquire whether specimens exist at the Cardiff Free Library.'<sup>17</sup> His collecting strategy is borne out in the NLW's purchasing of a book of accounts kept by a peripatetic schoolmaster (1837-49), which is described as quaint and amusing in the council report, and a minute book of the Llewelyn Benefit Society (1840-1873).<sup>18</sup> Ballinger's general approach to collecting was to bring as many items which documented life in Wales (whatever that happened to be) into the library creating 'a collection of things' which he regarded as 'for mainly future use.'<sup>19</sup> It seems that Ballinger did not necessarily give precedence to Welsh

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<sup>16</sup> John Ballinger, 'The National Library of Wales in Relation to other Libraries and Institutions', *The Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, Vol.1, No.2 (1911), pp.33-41, p.40.

<sup>17</sup> 'No Title', *Evening Express*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1904 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), p.2.

<sup>18</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1909 to 1910*, p.38.

<sup>19</sup> John Ballinger, 'The National Library of Wales', *The Library*, Vol. s.3-1, No.3 (July 1910), pp.277-288, p.281.

language items over English ones and was more interested in persuading the public ‘of the importance of sending *everything*’ (Ballinger’s emphasis).<sup>20</sup>

It appears that Ballinger was an early pioneer in the collecting of printed ephemera, as the library’s printers’ files are cited as one of the earliest examples of this practice by Alan Clinton in his book on the history of the collection of printed ephemera. Clinton highlighted Ballinger’s collecting of the papers of jobbing printers and specifically the files from the *Tivyside Advertiser* in Cardigan, which Ballinger obtained for the library in 1909.<sup>21</sup> Ballinger recalled this episode in his book *Gleanings from a Printer’s File* where he described visiting the office in Cardigan to ask whether the library could acquire the old files. Ballinger emphasised that the ‘files yielded a rich harvest of documents illustrating the life of the district during the interesting period following the end of the Napoleonic wars, and the coming of railways and other conveniences which have changed the conditions of life in remote places.’<sup>22</sup>

The deliberate collecting of these ephemeral materials (the term ephemera is not commonly used in relation to printed material until the mid-twentieth century) was a relatively new practice during this period and, notably, even in the 1930s, the Bodleian Library in Oxford disposed of a large amount of ephemeral materials, as they could not be easily categorised.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, in 1968 they received the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera described today as ‘one of the largest and most important collections of printed ephemera in the world’ revealing how attitudes changed, but also the comparative uniqueness of Ballinger’s approach.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ballinger, ‘The National Library of Wales’, *The Library*, p.283.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Clinton, *Printed Ephemera* (London: Clive Bingley, 1981), p.24.

<sup>22</sup> John Ballinger, *Gleanings from a Printer’s File* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1928), p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, p.16.

<sup>24</sup> The Bodleian Library Website, ‘John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera - About the Collection’, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/johnson/about>, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016.



One of the early purchases made by the NLW in 1909 was 105 Civil War Tracts and Broad­sides which cost almost £83 and came from the Lord Polwarth collection. The Civil War Tracts were chosen because they were connected to Wales and the Borders and further improved the NLW's collection, as they had received some tracts via donations.<sup>25</sup> This significant and expensive purchase reveals that the library was keen to explore Wales' role in the Civil War using the tracts and broadsides to 'show what a valuable source of local history lies more or less hidden.'<sup>26</sup> Items such as these placed the Welsh at the centre of a particular historical event, rather than on the periphery, as some of the tracts were written by Welshmen, providing an alternative viewpoint on key events. The catalogue highlighted the fact that Welshmen were often the butt of tract writers' jokes, but optimistically concluded that '[t]he causes may be found in the number of men of Welsh birth and origin, who took part in the conflicts...and in the important part that Wales played in the War.'<sup>27</sup> Therefore these documents provide a window on Wales' involvement, emphasise the potential pivotal role played by the Welsh in the conflict and stimulate identity creation which was previously underdeveloped in connection with this historical event.

In the category of history 37% of purchases can be classed as heraldic and genealogical texts. These purchases should be considered within the wider context of the development of the field of genealogy during this period, such as the founding of the Society of Genealogists in 1911. The motivation for the establishment of the society was to create a consolidated index of genealogical documents held by official repositories across the country and to facilitate an increase in public access to archival documents.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> NLW Archive, A3, Court of Governors Minutes 1907-25, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1909, p.27.

<sup>26</sup> *Catalogue of Tracts of the Civil War and Commonwealth Period relating to Wales and the Borders* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1911), p.v.

<sup>27</sup> *Catalogue of Tracts*, p.vi

<sup>28</sup> Michael Sharpe, *Family Matters. A History of Genealogy* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2011), pp.100-103.

At the beginning of the Edwardian period genealogical research was becoming less of a scholarly pursuit and more of a business venture. Professional genealogists were keen to access a greater variety of documents, as they were increasingly engaged by private clients to research their pedigree, including American clients keen to learn about their British roots. Many of these professionals became members of the society with the aim of improving working conditions in archives and the accessibility of certain materials.<sup>29</sup> These types of professional genealogists visited the NLW, such as Philip Hugh Lawson from Chester who visited in June 1910 and September 1911 for several days to consult genealogical material.<sup>30</sup> The purchase log indicates that the library committee was keen to increase their collection of genealogical documents and the appointment of John Davies, a Welsh bibliographer and genealogist, to the library staff in 1908 is evidence of their commitment to this field of study.<sup>31</sup>

One of these early genealogical acquisitions for the library was the substantial Coleman Deeds purchased in 1909 for £65; James Coleman was a collector from London and had amassed over 50,000 deeds from England and Wales. Similar to the Civil War Tracts and Broad sides, the library only purchased the documents relating to Wales which equated to 944 deeds, and it was highlighted in the council report that these documents were sources for both the genealogist and topographer.<sup>32</sup> Other purchases include a transcript of the Tai Croesin MS, a collection of pedigrees mostly of north Walian families, the second edition of the Royal Tribes of Wales and a copy of the Harleian MSS in the British Museum, which included a genealogical history of the ancient nobility in Wales.<sup>33</sup> Catherine Nash has identified a similar surge of interest in genealogy in Ireland

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<sup>29</sup> Sharpe, *Family Matters*, pp.92-93.

<sup>30</sup> NLW Archive, M3/230-31 Registers of Readers – Printed Books Department May 1909- August 1912, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1910-7<sup>th</sup> June 1910 and 15<sup>th</sup> September 1911-19<sup>th</sup> September 1911; NLW Archives, N4/1-2 Register of Readers and loans – Manuscript Department April 1909-September 1912, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1910-7<sup>th</sup> June 1910 and 15<sup>th</sup> September 1911-19<sup>th</sup> September 1911.

<sup>31</sup> WBO, 'John Davies (1860-1939)', accessed 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

<sup>32</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1909-10*, p.42, p.36.

<sup>33</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1909-10*, p.37, p.39.

at the end of the nineteenth century. In reference to John O'Hart's seminal work *Irish Pedigrees* (1876) which linked the origins of the Irish people back to Adam, Nash argues that it is a 'classic example of the collective origin stories that were central to late-nineteenth-century European nationalist projects...Ideas of ancestry and origins thus have a complex relationship to ideas of national identity...Genealogy can be used to define collective group membership.'<sup>34</sup>

Similar to the eighteenth-century bardic tradition in Wales, genealogy had not just been the domain of the gentry. Sharpe actually goes so far as to highlight the uniqueness of Wales, since the Tudor period, in their 'preoccupation with the genealogy of the common man, rather than the gentry, [which] gave the Welsh a particular identity that set them apart.'<sup>35</sup> Like some of the historical texts purchased, the genealogical items are not entirely focused on the Welsh elite. For example, the pedigree of the Welsh gypsy and harp player Jeremiah Wood whose father Valentine Wood was thought to be the first to take up the harp, was purchased. In addition, a register of baptisms was bought which had been kept by Congregationalist ministers in the parish of Llangunnor in Carmarthenshire, 1819-1865.<sup>36</sup>

These patterns in the purchasing practices of the library may have been a result of Ballinger's more inclusive approach, but it is difficult to pinpoint his specific influence in relation to a particular purchase, as often discussions took place outside minuted meetings. However, Ballinger's own writings indicate a methodological approach to collecting which acknowledges 'the value to the future historians of these local products. Individually, they appear to be of small importance. Bought into a classified group in the National Library they have a real value.'<sup>37</sup> The majority of the genealogical purchases

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<sup>34</sup> Catherine Nash, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, & the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), p.4, p.10.

<sup>35</sup> Sharpe, *Family Matters*, p.60.

<sup>36</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1909-10*, p.37; *NLW Report of the Council 1910 to 1913*, p.48.

<sup>37</sup> Ballinger, *Gleanings from a Printer's File*, p.2.

were made by the full council before the books committee was appointed. Therefore these decisions were made by a group keen on building a Welsh cultural identity, or, as Nash terms, ‘a collective group membership’ in which genealogical documents had a part to play.

Sharpe emphasises the public and communal nature of poetry and genealogy in Wales, with bards often reciting poems and pedigrees. Sharpe argues that ‘[s]uch recitals were popular entertainment, but also helped bind the community together by emphasizing ties of kinship and reminders of a shared past.’<sup>38</sup> As one of the first national institutions in Wales the library’s system had the potential to reinforce or construct a particular version of Welsh national identity.

In a sense, the library committee was constructing, consciously or not, what Paul John Eakin describes as ‘a narrative identity system’: a scaffold which can support a particular storyline.<sup>39</sup> As Stefan Berger argues, the importance assigned to national histories largely depends on the circumstances of the nation. In the case of Wales, ‘the national history was more difficult to construct and more contested’, so a greater emphasis was placed on the part it could play in reinforcing national identity.<sup>40</sup> The high number of academics involved in the management of the library meant that key Welsh documents were collected with the research process in mind, including the writing of national histories. Paul Lawrence argues that ‘[w]ritten history became important to cultural nationalism because it supplied an authoritative sense of continuity with an (often imaginary) past, and hence a sense of group identity in the present’.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sharpe, *Family Matters*, p.60.

<sup>39</sup> Paul John Eakin, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp.24-25

<sup>40</sup> Stefan Berger, ‘The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe’ in Stefan Berger (ed.), *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.30-62, p.37.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Lawrence, ‘Nationalism and Historical Writing’ in John Bruilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.713-730, p.724.

The NLW purchasing patterns suggest that those involved were laying the groundwork for the writing of new histories of Wales. These were individuals from a non-conformist background who Prys Morgan would describe as ‘fresh myth-makers’ in the mould of those involved in Wales’ cultural revival in the Romantic period.<sup>42</sup> However, it could be argued that a more suitable description of those involved might be, in the words of Anthony D. Smith, ‘nationalist educator-intellectuals’, less inventors of tradition(s) and more (re)discoverers of the past(s). These intellectuals identified examples from the ethnic past in order to construct ‘a composite nationalist mythology.’<sup>43</sup>

## **b. Religion**

In contrast to the history collection which was more diverse in its origins, the majority of the religious texts were printed in Welsh and are related to sermons and hymns, or document the lives of key preachers. For example *Hosanna i fab Dafydd, neu, Gasgliad o hymnau* (‘Hosanna to the son of David, or, a collection of hymns’) by William Williams, printed in 1754 and *Sylwadau ar Bregethu Canu etc.* (‘Comments on Preaching and Singing etc.’) by Samuel Williams of Aberystwyth, printed in 1813. The library also purchased several ecclesiastical pamphlets printed in 1740 by the Pontypool Press (one of Wales’ early printing presses) documenting the letters of the English Anglican cleric and one of the founders of Methodism the Reverend George Whitefield.

The Pontypool Press was directly linked to a non-conformist upsurge and also printed Welsh translations of sermons and hymnals.<sup>44</sup> In an appraisal of Whitefield’s career in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, Keith Edward Beebe and David Ceri Jones argue that ‘the Welsh Methodist movement owe much to his counsel and guidance...[he]

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<sup>42</sup> Prys Morgan ‘The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period’ in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.43-100, p.69.

<sup>43</sup> A.D. Smith, *National Identity* (London and New York: Penguin, 1991), pp.64-66.

<sup>44</sup> Eiluned Rees, *The Welsh Book-Trade before 1820* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1988), p.xxiv.

showed how the religious fortunes of their respective countries could be transformed from within, rather than without, the Established Churches.’<sup>45</sup> The collecting of these specific documents recorded the development of a unique Welsh religious experience and, more broadly, Wales’ role in a significant evangelical network.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century non-conformity had become a distinct part of Welsh cultural identity following the Blue Books Report of 1847 which united all Welsh non-conformist denominations against Anglicanism. The criticisms levied at the Welsh in the report led to the development of a more English-dominated education system in Wales, so the chapel became a refuge for the Welsh language. The increase in Welsh language publishing during this period was driven by the non-conformist movement and within this sphere, to use Benedict Anderson’s phrase, a ‘new fixity to language’ developed which slowly ‘helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of nation.’<sup>46</sup> On the one hand, this finding contradicts Anderson’s central theory as he argued that religion was largely absent from nation construction. However, Eric Hobsbawm identified language (even a minority language such as Welsh) as a key proto-national bond used to construct national identity which developed in tandem with an increase in the dissemination of literature and a rise in literacy levels.<sup>47</sup>

The library began collecting copies of Welsh-language sermons and preacher notes as soon as it became established. Preaching was the cornerstone of Welsh non-conformity. W.P. Griffith claimed that a ‘distinctive ‘style’ of Welsh preaching’ emerged ‘deploying techniques which were empathic to the people and, crucially, employing the

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<sup>45</sup> Keith Edward Beebe and David Ceri Jones, ‘Whitefield and the ‘Celtic’ Revivals’ in Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (eds.), *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.132-149, p.149.

<sup>46</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* 1983 (London: Verso, Revised and extended edition 1991), p.44.

<sup>47</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*, 1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.60.

Welsh language itself.’<sup>48</sup> In 1900 86% of congregations within Calvinistic Methodism still remained Welsh-speaking and two years before the founding of the library’s Royal Charter a religious revival (although short-lived) had swept through Wales.<sup>49</sup> Griffith has argued that ‘a distinctive national ‘style’ was an inevitable development in a nation such as Wales which had no state structure and hardly any institutional characteristics to identify it before the late nineteenth century...religion gave Wales one means of marking itself out as special.’<sup>50</sup> The NLW was evidently keen to collect documents from the eighteenth-century non-conformist movement. These items highlighted the direct link between religion and language in Wales, which was still relevant during the decade that the library was founded.

Kenneth O. Morgan boldly argued that ‘[w]ith all its limitations, nonconformity was responsible for almost every significant and worthwhile aspect of social and cultural activity in late nineteenth-century Wales.’<sup>51</sup> He highlighted the role of the chapel in the development of educational provision in Sunday schools, non-conformist led elementary schools and, later, a university. Also, the chapel nurtured the preacher-poet who, in the 1880s, became the professor-poet in the wake of the recognition of Welsh as an academic subject. Densil Morgan argues that ‘Welsh Nonconformity was of the people, by the people and for the people’: a democratising movement that enabled social mobility.<sup>52</sup>

The NLW emerged from this broader religious landscape, as it was championed and later managed by men who were products of this chapel culture. Although working in other professions, John Gwenogvryn Evans was ordained to the Unitarian Ministry,

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<sup>48</sup> W.P. Griffith, ‘Preaching Second to No Other under the Sun’: Edward Matthews, the Nonconformist Pulpit and Welsh Identity during the Mid-Nineteenth Century’ in Robert Pope (ed.), *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c.1700-2000* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp.61-83, p.65.

<sup>49</sup> D.W. Bebbington, ‘Religion and national identity in nineteenth-century Wales and Scotland’ in Stuart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), pp.489-504, p.492.

<sup>50</sup> Griffith, ‘Preaching Second to No Other under the Sun’, p.76.

<sup>51</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p.18.

<sup>52</sup> Dafydd Densil Morgan, *Wales and the Word: Historical Perspectives on Welsh Identity and Religion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp.115-116.

John Fisher was a deacon, and Professor Edward Anwyl was a lay preacher.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, '[n]on-conformity found political expression through the Liberal Party' and from the mid-nineteenth century Welsh chapels were a hot-bed of political activism: the first library council also contained five Liberal MPs.<sup>54</sup> In practical terms, non-conformity was an intrinsic part of many people's everyday lives and symbolically represented a key element of Welsh national identity.

It was likely that the council were aware of, and acquainted with, a ready audience for this material beyond the library committees. As shown in Figure 5.1, the existence of this audience is borne out in the readers' registers (1909-12) which show that fifty-nine religious workers used the reading room during this time period, which was the second largest group of readers, after students. Their reading materials are not entirely focused on religious Welsh-language texts and although these titles make up around a quarter of their requests, history, philology and literature also dominate.

### **c. Literature**

In this period 16% of items bought can be categorised as literature and the majority of these purchases are Welsh-language poetry from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Some of the authors of these works were religious men such as the Baptist minister and poet David Saunders of Merthyr (1769-1840) who wrote in strict Welsh metre.<sup>55</sup> Also, the library purchased items such as the poem titled *Cywydd y Drindod* ('Trinity Poem') written in 1793 by David Richards ('Dafydd Ionawr' 1751-1827) who was a schoolmaster and poet.<sup>56</sup> Richards had been taught by Reverend Evan Evans ('Ieuan Brydydd Hir'), a famous and well-regarded Welsh poet of the eighteenth century, who, in turn, had been

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<sup>53</sup> WBO, 'John Gwenogvryn Evans (1852-1930)'; 'John Fisher (1862-1930)'; 'Edward Anwyl (1866-1914)'.

<sup>54</sup> Susan Pitchford, *Identity Tourism Imaging and Imagining the Nation* (Bingley: Emerald Group, 2008), p.24; David Hempton, 'Evangelical enthusiasm and national identity in Scotland and Wales' in David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland. From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.49-71.

<sup>55</sup> WBO, 'David Saunders' (1769-1840), accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

<sup>56</sup> WBO, 'David Richards' (1751-1827), accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.



taught by Lewis Morris (1701-1765) from Anglesey, who along with his brothers and others had led a Welsh cultural revival.

Cathryn A. Charnell-White states that the Welsh poet of the eighteenth century was ‘revered in his community’ and that ‘the strict-metre poet in particular, owed his iconic status to the patriotic antiquarianism of the Welsh cultural revival of the eighteenth century.’<sup>57</sup> Therefore the library’s motivation to preserve these particular manuscripts may have come from a desire to document this poetic genealogy, as well as to link the contemporary cultural revival, which has created such institutions as the NLW with, what Charnell-White describes as, a ‘bardic identity...so crucial to the construction of Welsh cultural identity in eighteenth century Britain.’<sup>58</sup> Coupled with an increase in the academic study of Welsh-language literature, of which several members of the court and council were leading lights, the case for the library to obtain this literature, and particularly poetry, appears strong.

Following the establishment of the books committee in October 1912 there was an increase in the purchasing of books and MSS relating to the Welsh literature of Wales. This rise is unsurprising considering the direct influence John Humphreys Davies had on decision-making. A substantial purchase during this period was the Panton MSS: ninety-one volumes of which the majority were handwritten by the Reverend Evan Evans (Ieuan Brydydd Hir). Rev. Evans (1731-1788) was acquainted with the Morris brothers from Anglesey – a group of literary figures that Davies was extremely interested in and had published on. Reverend Evans had spent his life transcribing the many MSS he found in the various libraries of Wales with a particular emphasis on poetry, and he later published a volume entitled *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards*. The decision to instruct the librarian to enter into negotiations for the Panton MSS was authorised in a

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<sup>57</sup> Cathryn A. Charnell-White, *Welsh Poetry of the French Revolution* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p.4.

<sup>58</sup> Charnell-White, *Welsh Poetry of the French Revolution*, p.2.

books committee meeting attended only by Davies and Principal Thomas Francis Roberts in June 1914.<sup>59</sup>

#### **d. Science**

One of the library's aims, laid down in the mission statement, was to grant the Welsh people 'greater facilities and opportunities for education in all branches of science' and to aid the furthering of scientific research. However, as discussed, few scientific titles were purchased, most likely the result of an absence of representatives from this discipline. At the beginning of January 1915 the books committee authorised the purchase of a complete set of the publications of the *Anthropological Society of London*, 1849-1912, at a cost of £45. It is noted in the minutes that the purchase of this series had been recommended by Herbert John Fleure the Professor of Zoology at the UCW in Aberystwyth at this time.<sup>60</sup> Also, in the same meeting, it was decided that a complete set of the periodical *Nature* be bought and in the previous month a copy of *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* had been purchased.<sup>61</sup> The only other relevant publication purchased was a complete set of the *Société géologique France Bulletin* from 1830 to 1911, in July 1914 for £32.<sup>62</sup> Although it is not listed whether this acquisition was a recommendation, it almost certainly came from Fleure, as he was also a geographer (he became the first Professor of Geography and Anthropology at Aberystwyth in 1917), a fluent French speaker and wrote extensively on the geography of France.<sup>63</sup> The recommendation from Fleure, by then a regular library user, suggests that the books committee were receptive to external requests for items, however, it may still be the case,

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<sup>59</sup> NLW Archive, D1/4, Books Sub-Committee Minutes 1912-1916, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1914, p.1.

<sup>60</sup> D1/4, Books Sub-Committee Minutes 1912-1916, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1915, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> D1/4, Books Sub-Committee Minutes 1912-1916, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1915, p.4. 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914, p.6.

<sup>62</sup> NLW Archives, B3, Council Minutes of Meetings 1908-1949, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1914, p.23.

<sup>63</sup> Hugh Clout, 'Cross-Channel Geographers: a century of activity', *Cybergeog: European Journal of Geography*, No.330 (2005), pp.1-24, p.8.

that the library missed out on manuscript collections linked to the development of science, technology and agriculture because of an innate bias.

The council did discuss establishing a Library of Agriculture within the NLW in response to the development of agricultural education in Wales. The Treasury had even agreed to grant £200 for the purchase of books ‘and a further grant up to £300 equal to the contributions in money or books obtained from outside sources, on condition that the books are lent to persons engaged in the study of Agriculture throughout Wales and Monmouthshire.’<sup>64</sup> However, it seems that this was not developed further even though library staff reported receiving queries from farmers which they were unable to answer because the NLW lacked the appropriate works of reference.<sup>65</sup> At the end of 1915 the lack of progress was attributed to the library getting into arrears with the purchase of books.<sup>66</sup> It appears that the library did not prioritise an agricultural library even though financial support was available and there was a demand for agricultural knowledge from the public.

The absence of scientific and technological books and MSS from the library’s early purchases suggests that these subject areas were not prioritised or deemed as a particularly important element of Welsh culture. It is now generally regarded that until very recently very little was known about Wales’ scientific history, even though key figures in these subject areas have now been identified.<sup>67</sup> Iwan Rhys Morus, in his essay on the Welsh scientist William Robert Grove, states that

[e]ven though Grove’s brief scientific career mostly took place in London, I want to try to paint him into a thoroughly Welsh picture here. I think that it’s important to do this simply because we do not usually think of ourselves in Wales as having much to do with science. We’re a

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<sup>64</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1910 to 1913*, p.18; Richard J. Colyer, *Men’s Proper Study: A history of agricultural science education in Aberystwyth 1878-1978* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1982)

<sup>65</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1910 to 1913*, p.19.

<sup>66</sup> NLW, (Available: Open Shelves, South Reading Room), NLW Annual Reports, 1909-1924/5, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1915, pp.1-2.

<sup>67</sup> The Learned Society of Wales Website, ‘History of Science’, <https://www.learnedsociety.wales/our-projects/history-of-science/>, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> February 2016; John Tucker, ‘Wales Needs A Science Museum’, *Agenda*, No.41 (Summer, 2010), pp.50-51.

land of hymns and arias, preachers and poets. But Grove's career should remind us of something that most of us probably never know. Wales in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a vibrant scientific culture.<sup>68</sup>

The process of identity construction or reinforcement relies on the 'stories' that are readily available and championed by national institutions, such as the library and the museum. Carol E. Harrison and Ann Johnson 'present a parallel discourse of national identity' to Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* 'rooted in modernity and oriented toward the future rather than toward the past.' Harrison and Johnson argue that a nation's identity can also be rooted in its modern achievements in areas such as science and technology: 'national identity is rooted in a tradition of invention as well as in the invention of tradition.'<sup>69</sup> They conclude that '[t]he nation that seeks to demonstrate its long unbroken connection to an illustrious past also endeavors to present itself as orientated towards a scientific future', but is this the case for Wales in the early part of the twentieth century?

It may be the case that scientific papers relating to Wales or other Celtic nations or composed in Welsh or other Celtic languages were not abundant nor necessarily available to the library for purchase. However, the complete absence of scientific material or even any items relating to agriculture or mining in Wales is conspicuous. In other subject areas the library purchased material in English which related to Wales, so a lack of Welsh-language scientific papers is not an explanation for this deficiency. There is also evidence that there were thriving scientific centres in Wales during the nineteenth century such as Swansea. Like Morus, Louise Miskell singles out the contribution of William Robert Grove, but also highlights 'a substantial corpus of scientific talent at Swansea. Compared to many other towns [across Great Britain], Swansea was liberally blessed with

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<sup>68</sup> Iwan Rhys Morus, 'William Robert Grove: The Scientist as Hero' in H.V.Bowen (ed.), *Heroes and Villains in Welsh History. A New History of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2012), pp.114-119, p.116.

<sup>69</sup> Carol E. Harrison and Ann Johnson, 'Introduction: Science and National Identity', *Osiris*, Vol.24 (2009), pp.1-14, p.3.

gifted scientists during this period.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the Royal Institution of South Wales had been established in Swansea in 1835. Therefore, it could be argued, that the composition of the library council and members' interests directly affected what areas of Wales' history were represented in the library's collection and what was not.

The dearth of literature linked to the areas of agriculture and industry is in stark contrast to Wales' history: a broadly agrarian country until the early nineteenth century and then one of the first industrial nations. However, the early acquisitions for the library documented the religious history of Wales including the development of the Welsh bible and the growth of non-conformity. In addition, the documents purchased which relate to the history of Wales include a number of accounts of tours conducted in the early nineteenth century around Wales. The motivation for purchasing one such manuscript titled *A Journal of a Tour thro' North Wales*, begun in 1802, was highlighted in the council's report: '[t]he Journal throughout gives a description of the towns which form a wonderful contrast compared with their present state.'<sup>71</sup> One of the priorities of the council's collection policy was to document a pre-industrial Wales and record traditions and customs, which may have been in decline. However, this approach did relatively little to address the complexities of Wales' social, economic and scientific history.

#### **e. Not Purchased**

During the period (1909-1916) the council/book committee refused to purchase fourteen items that were discussed. Several of these refusals were recorded as being a direct result of a lack of available funds. For example, at the end of 1909 the offer of a collection of Gaelic books from a Mr Craigie in Perth was declined because the book fund was exhausted and in 1915 the library was unable to purchase a George Borrow MS for £50

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<sup>70</sup> Louise Miskell, "The Making of a New 'Welsh Metropolis': Science, Leisure and Industry in Early Nineteenth-Century Swansea", *History*, Vol.89, No.289 (2003), pp.32-52, p.47.

<sup>71</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1909-10*, p.42, p.41.

for the same reason.<sup>72</sup> The majority of these refusals occurred from mid-1914 when the library's government funding was cut and it was not appropriate to run a large fundraising campaign, as a result of the war. Some items on the agenda such as a subscription to *The American Economic Review* were deferred to discuss at a later date.

The collecting of engraving and prints was highlighted in the library's mission statement but little was purchased even though Ballinger made efforts to contact dealers. For example a book of sketches of North Wales was offered in 1914 and a water-colour drawing of Llandilo National Schools in 1915 for around £6, both were refused. However, in 1909 Ballinger had informed the council that a set of Monmouthshire prints and drawing was about to come on the market and they agreed to purchase the collection for £25. Ballinger described the collection as 'the most complete ever likely to be brought together, and contained prints and drawings of great value for illustrating the topography of the County.'<sup>73</sup> Ballinger was a native of Monmouthshire which may have influenced his decision to make a special plea to the council for this set to be purchased.

In summary, most objects that the library refused were, in the main, related to a lack of available funds. However, items were more likely to be purchased if they had an advocate such as Ballinger or, in the case of several geographical and anthropological purchases, Professor Herbert Fleure. The set of publications from the Anthropological Society recommended by Fleure were purchased as late as 1915 for the relatively substantial amount of £45.

### **III. The Purchasing of Printed Books and the Copyright Act**

From July 1912 the Copyright Act (1911) enabled the NLW to receive a copy of all publications in the UK.<sup>74</sup> The library's right to receive these books was not automatically

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<sup>72</sup> B3, Council Minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1909, p.55; D1/4, Books Sub-Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1915, p.4. George Borrow (1803-1881) was an author who wrote novels and travelogues. He wrote *Wild Wales* (1862) after completing a walking tour.

<sup>73</sup> B3, Council Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1909, p.44.

<sup>74</sup> *NLW Report of the Council 1910 to 1913*, p.13.

granted because it was a national institution. Therefore the government's intention to update the Copyright Act of 1842 in 1911 gave the NLW the opportunity to be officially acknowledged as one of Great Britain's copyright libraries. A deputation was submitted to Sydney Buxton MP, the President to the Board of Trade, and following a consultation the NLW was named a copyright library with some conditions attached.<sup>75</sup> These conditions meant that the library could not claim a copy of a book (unless it was written wholly or mainly in Welsh or any other Celtic language, or relating to the Welsh or other Celtic people) if the number of copies in the published edition did not exceed three hundred, did not exceed four hundred and the published price was over £5, or did not exceed six hundred and the published price was over £10.<sup>76</sup>

The library's inclusion in the Copyright Act meant that a steady stream of books now arrived to fill the shelves and more of the budget could be spent on MSS and other unique items that came on the market. The library continued to purchase modern printed books, but they tended to be books outside of the remit of the Copyright Act, extra copies of particular titles, foreign language material, reader requests or in reaction to gaps in the library's stock. The vast majority of these purchases were not discussed by the council or books committee (probably because the amounts were too small) instead they were recorded in an order book. It is likely that these smaller decisions were made by Ballinger and other library staff.

This section presents a broad analysis of the printed books purchased by the library (1910-1916) which offers some insight into how the library attempted to shape its own collection outside of those items received via the Copyright Act.<sup>77</sup> Few printed books were purchased before 1913 which was likely due to the uncertainty facing the library

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<sup>75</sup> Historic Hansard Online (HHO), HC Deb, 'Copyright Bill', Vol.23, cc.2656-2657, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1911.

<sup>76</sup> Walter Arthur Copinger and J.M. Easton, *The Law of Copyright in Works of Literature, Art, Architecture, Photography, Music and the Drama* (London: Stevens & Haynes, fifth edition 1915), p.749.

<sup>77</sup> Records of printed books purchased by the NLW survive from 7<sup>th</sup> April 1910 in NLW Archive, M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol.1, 1910-1918.

over the copyright status. Orders dramatically increased in 1913 which, in part, was due to the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) book box scheme which launched at the beginning of 1914. During 1913 approximately a quarter of all printed books purchased were for the WEA scheme.<sup>78</sup> In the same way as MSS purchases declined from 1914, the procurement of printed books was also affected following the war-related budget cuts.

The WEA book box scheme (examined in detail in chapter 5) had a significant impact on the type of books the library purchased. In short, the NLW sent boxes of books to educational classes which could be kept by the students for several months, so they could have access to expensive textbooks which would otherwise have been unaffordable. A condition of the library's charter was that only duplicates could be sent out, so the library had to purchase at least one extra copy of a requested title and often classes would require more than one copy for their students. In almost direct contrast to the library council's interests, the majority of the WEA classes studied modern economics, politics and industrial history. Therefore a large number of social science textbooks were purchased during this period which catered for a different type of (remote) library user, outside of the academic study of Welsh history and literature promoted by the council. Furthermore, social sciences was the second most purchased printed books category during this time period.

Supported by Daniel Lleufer Thomas and implemented by Ballinger, the book box scheme enabled the library to cater for industrial constituencies in Wales such as the South Wales coalfields and the quarry towns of the north. The books requested for these classes were a far cry from the rural, agrarian Welsh Wales that the library inhabited and was curating. Instead, more titles were of an international flavour with few books requested which were specifically about Wales or in Welsh. As a result of the duplicates

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<sup>78</sup> M3/6, Book Order Book, Vol. 1, 1913. The library purchased approximately 231 printed titles during 1913 and 58 of these were for the WEA classes.



rule, the library's public catalogue was shaped by the requests from the WEA, arguably creating a more realistic reflection of the nation's interests.

It is evident from the printed books ordered that the library made efforts from 1913 to improve the Celtic collection beyond the Welsh corpus. Books in Breton, Irish, Gaelic and Romany which were outside the remit of the Copyright Act were bought, and books categorised as foreign language literature were the most purchased during this time period. For example the library bought Gaelic poetry, a Gaelic bible published in Edinburgh in 1826 and several collections of Irish music.<sup>79</sup> They also bought Scottish periodicals and poetry, books on the history of Brittany and the Breton language and a study of the gypsies and their language.<sup>80</sup> The library also purchased various books, journals and catalogues relating to Celtic studies in French and German. Ballinger would regularly order from Monsieur Maurice at Le Dault in Paris and Gustav Fock in Leipzig.<sup>81</sup>

The library's mission statement strongly emphasised the library's commitment to collecting works relating to the Celtic peoples and their languages which in reality constituted a substantial amount of material. Unsurprisingly, when it came to purchasing MSS the council, in the main, had prioritised Welsh items in light of their own interests, but also within the constraints of a limited budget. The library's printed book purchases suggests that they were attempting to somewhat redress the balance, however, a large number of the books relating to other Celtic nations could only be sourced from abroad and were unavailable via the Copyright Act. Therefore, it is evident that during this period there were attempts to create a Celtic library but limited resources meant that this aim was only partially realised.

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<sup>79</sup> NLW Archive, M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol.1, 1910-18: Gaelic poetry, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1913, p.37; Gaelic bible 27<sup>th</sup> April 1914, p.98; Irish Music 10<sup>th</sup> June 1914, p.110, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1914, p.121.

<sup>80</sup> M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol.1, 1910-18: Highland Monthly, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1913, p.37; Books on Bretagne and Breton, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1911, p.13, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1913, p.20; Gypsies and their language, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1913, p.59.

<sup>81</sup> M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol. 1, 1910-18: order to Gustav Fock, Leipzig for books on philology and Celtic literature, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1911, p.2; order to Monsieur Maurice, Le Dault, Paris for French journals including 4 volumes of *Celtique*, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1913, p.61.

From mid-1912 the library would have received any new scientific British publications via the Copyright Act. A few science-related books were purchased including two on the flora in various parts of Great Britain and a volume on mollusca, but, like the MS acquisitions, it was limited.<sup>82</sup> Unlike other sections such as history and Celtic studies, there was little attempt to plug any gaps in the existing scientific collections, even though the Copyright Act only provided books published from 1912 onwards.<sup>83</sup> The mission statement stipulated that the library create ‘opportunities for education in all branches of science’, however, in terms of purchasing, the library chose to invest its efforts and budget into acquiring items from the subjects of history, religion, literature and Celtic studies.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The early years of the library reveal that the motivations of the founders and other key individuals were heavily influenced by their own backgrounds and interests, which may have created a bias towards certain subject areas. Particular fields of study such as religion, history and literature were prioritised, whereas science, agriculture and technology were generally overlooked. The cause of this disparity is likely the lack of representatives from these subject areas on the council and an overrepresentation from the disciplines of literature, history and religion. There is evidence to suggest that Ballinger had a different attitude to collecting compared to other members of the council, which led to an increase in the collection of ephemeral material and items that documented Wales’ social history.

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<sup>82</sup> M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol.1, 1910-18: J.A. Brewer, *A new flora of the neighbourhood of Reigate* (London: William Pamplin, 1856) and W. Hodgson and J.G. Goodchild, *Flora of Cumberland* (Carlisle: W.Meals & Co., 1898), 19<sup>th</sup> May 1913, pp.46-7; Henry Adams and Arthur Adams, *The genera of recent mollusca* (London: J.Van Voorst, 1858), 6<sup>th</sup> April 1914, p.96.

<sup>83</sup> M3/6, Book Order Books, Vol.1, 1910-18: the library purchased history titles to improve the existing collection. For example C.H. Browning, *Welsh Settlements of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: W.J. Campbell, 1912), 16<sup>th</sup> April 1913, p.39; A.E. Murray, *A history of the commercial and financial relations between England and Ireland: from the period of the restoration* (London: P.S. King, 1903), 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1913, p.55.

These findings echo those of David L. Adamson who identified the key role Welsh intellectuals played in defining the nation through the establishment of cultural institutions. He highlights how their direct involvement in fields such as literature, politics, historiography and language influenced how they operated when they contributed to these national projects.<sup>84</sup> Adamson argues that their approach and sense of nationhood were embodied in the intellectual construct of the *gwerin*. He contends that this conception of the *gwerin* as the foundation of Welsh identity dominated Welsh cultural institutions leaving little room for multiple identities in the story of Wales.<sup>85</sup> This behaviour can be identified in the library management's approach to purchasing and the list of subject areas that were neglected.

The library's attempts in the early years to engage with and influence a range of different constituencies appears, in the main, to be a symbolic gesture rather than an example of a genuine desire to connect with other aspects of Welsh society, beyond the academy and Aberystwyth. The membership of the library's court suggests wide-ranging engagement, but in reality attendance was low and the majority of day-to-day decisions were made by the council or, later, various sub-committees. The limited nature of this group who were shaping the library's future were in stark contrast to the diverse group who engaged with the concept of the library during the fundraising campaign. It is not until 1914 that Ballinger's book box scheme was implemented which engaged with the communities who had, and still were, contributing financially to the library.

The founding statement was generally adhered to as the majority of purchases show the prioritisation of the collection of works composed in Welsh or any other Celtic language or which related to the Welsh or other Celtic people, although the commitment

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<sup>84</sup> David L. Adamson, 'The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales' in R. Fevre and A. Thompson (eds.), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University Wales Press, 1999), pp.48-68, p.49, p.58.

<sup>85</sup> Adamson, 'The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales', p.67.

made to creating better scientific resources was not fulfilled. There were only a few items purchased that were linked to other Celtic nations, but this was probably the result of a lack of funds and a desire to, first and foremost, improve the Welsh collections. Printed book purchasing aimed to redress this balance, but the 'Celtic library' brief was so wide it was impossible for the library to represent Wales and all the other Celtic nations in any depth.

The conception of 'Wales' employed by the library was focused primarily on the nation's role in a historical context, its heritage of literature with a particular emphasis on poetry and its deep-rooted relationship with non-conformity. In fact, the library's conception of Wales was very much in concurrence with that of Wales' eighteenth century cultural revival, which focused primarily on the nation's rich history and writings. However, the library's particular slant omitted much of what had happened in Wales during the nineteenth century, including scientific and technological advances. This notion also lent on a specifically romanticised version of Welsh history which had gained traction in the popular Eisteddfod movement. This analysis of the NLW's purchasing policy concurs with Belinda Tiffen's evaluation of the National Library of Australia's early acquisitions in that 'collecting decisions are politicised and cannot be purely subjective' and that a national archive 'must participate in the social and political discourses of the time.'<sup>86</sup>

There is evidence, in areas such as the NLW's purchasing policy, which suggests that the conception of Wales was manipulated by political and cultural elites seeking to build a particular version of national identity. In spite of evidence that points to a policy of divisive selectivity, the library management's methods are not an example of what Eric

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<sup>86</sup> Belinda Tiffen, 'Recording the Nation: Nationalism and the History of the National Library of Australia', *The Australian Library Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 3/4 (2007), pp.342-359, p.357.

Hobsbawm would describe as inventing traditions.<sup>87</sup> The NLW's approach aligns more with Anthony D. Smith ethno-symbolist theory where malleable heritage, myths and traditions 'come to form a distinctive repository of ethnic culture, to be draw upon selectively by successive generations of a community.'<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1-14.

<sup>88</sup> A.D. Smith, *National Identity* (London and New York: Penguin, 1991), p.38.

## **Chapter Five: The Users of the National Library of Wales 1909-1916**

After almost forty years of campaigning the National Library of Wales (NLW) finally opened to the public in 1909 in a temporary location while the new building was completed. By this point, many of Wales' significant political and cultural figures had been involved in securing the library's future through lobbying the government, publicising the campaign and personal financial contributions. The core of this select group had consistently fought to secure this cultural institution from the early 1890s, and had subsequently gone on to play influential roles in its management. In addition, in the early twentieth century over 1,500 people residing in Wales and beyond had engaged with the concept of a NLW by subscribing to its building fund.

In the previous chapter the vision and intentions of the founders and the library management were, as far as is possible from the sources, clarified. This chapter compares those intentions with how the library's services were utilised between 1909 and 1916. Three distinct user groups are analysed: the readers who availed themselves of the services in the library (April 1909-August 1912), the attendees at educational classes in Wales who received book boxes (1914-1916), and a group of interneers in the Ruhleben camp in Berlin who requested books for educational purposes from the library (1915-1916). By means of new research into these key user groups it is possible to ascertain who was using the library and what materials were being consulted during this period. The data collection process and analytical approach to this study is explored in detail in the methodology section of the thesis (pp.65-66).

In Part I of this chapter the reading room usage (1909-1912) is analysed to determine who was visiting the library and what materials were requested. This section draws upon data extracted from the NLW's readers' registers, various censuses and the current library catalogue, which has been collated in a database to enable the

identification of patterns and trends. The places readers travelled from are identified to determine the extent to which the location of the library in Aberystwyth had an impact on who used the reading room. For the first time the library's readers for this period are identified and categorised by occupation, which are then explored in depth using case study examples. By analysing the readers' gender, background and reading materials, this section seeks to consider why an individual may have used the library and how this compares with the aims of the library's management. This section categorises all of the users' reading materials to identify popular and unpopular subject areas. It questions whether reading patterns concurred with the founders' vision and if it was being used as a Welsh or Celtic library. This section demonstrates that the curation of the collection by the library's management coupled with a low acceptance level of reader purchase requests resulted in a relatively narrow reader experience. However, readers' choices demonstrate that there was still room to uniquely navigate the collection which sheds light on possible perceptions of Welsh national identity.

Part II focuses on a book box scheme that the NLW developed in partnership with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). This scheme provided textbooks for individuals attending tutorial classes across Wales from early 1914. This section outlines the development of the programme, where the classes were located and the topics studied. It demonstrates that the books requested by these groups were very different from those consulted in the reading room. The boxes contained books focused predominantly on economics and international relations with few Welsh language titles or books specifically about Wales. In addition, these choices had an impact on the library's public catalogue as for every book sent out a duplicate had to be available at the library. Drawing on WEA figures, it is possible to estimate how many people used the scheme which demonstrates that it significantly increased the user numbers for the library as a whole.

Part III evaluates the library's contribution to a book box sent to internees being held in the Ruhleben camp in Berlin during the First World War. It explores the circumstances of the camp and what led a group of Welsh men to contact the university and the library to ask for Welsh reading material to be sent for educational purposes. This section compares what was requested by the internees with the items that the NLW decided to send, which did not necessarily align with the camp's educational programme. It can be argued that the NLW misinterpreted, wilfully or not, the request from the Welsh internees which, as a result, offers an insight into the library's perception of Welsh national identity.

This chapter compares the vision of the founders and management with the actual user experience. To an extent, their vision was reflected in the reading room usage, but these reading choices were directly influenced by the curated collection available. On the other hand, the remote user requests (WEA and Ruhleben), to a point, challenged the founders' view of the library as a provider of primarily Welsh reading material, as a number of these choices had a more international outlook or practical application. Although remote user engagement may have challenged the founders' vision it enabled the library to have more influence across a range of constituencies.

### **I. The Reading Room 1909-1912**

The library, temporarily located in the Assembly Rooms, opened officially to the public in October 1909. However, according to the register of readers, users were consulting material from as early as mid-April 1909. Ballinger stated that the reading room could only accommodate up to twelve readers on a given day, but during the analysed time period (April 1909-August 1912) this was only reached once, on average four readers used the reading room on a given date. In total, during this period, 364 unique readers used the library's reading room services; some were frequent visitors, others only occasional. Altogether, the readers consulted 1238 unique books, 103 manuscript



collections, ten map collections and three sets of prints. Items were consulted with varying degrees of regularity resulting in 8906 transactions during the period April 1909-August 1912.<sup>1</sup> Library patrons represented a tiny fraction of the Welsh nation in 1911: approximately 0.01% of the population.<sup>2</sup> From 1912 Ballinger attempted to increase users by supplying books to educational classes, but for most people the library served a symbolic purpose rather than a practical one.

However, these figures only account for the on-site users and not the potential readership of the library users' own published works which drew on the library's holdings. The impact of these works is more difficult to quantify but a number of users were influential cultural figures who would likely have had an audience for their publications. For example the scholar and author John Morris Jones visited the library thirteen times between 1910 and 1912. Jones consulted several Welsh MSS collections including Peniarth MS 29 which is a thirteenth century Welsh language MS known as the *Black Book of Chirk*. In 1913 Jones' book *A Welsh Grammar: historical and comparative* was published by Clarendon Press at Oxford University. Regarded as seminal, this work contributed significantly to the field of Welsh philology and was published by a mainstream academic publisher which would likely have increased the readership.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in 1914 J.R.R. Tolkien purchased a copy while studying at Exeter College Oxford which, alongside Finnish grammar, 'profoundly influenced the phonology and grammar of the later of his two chief Elvish languages, Sindarin.'<sup>4</sup> Therefore the NLW is likely to have had more influence than the user numbers alone would suggest.

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<sup>1</sup> A transaction represents every time a reader consulted an item in the reading room.

<sup>2</sup> The population of Wales in 1911 was 2,442,041. 'Total Population of Wales 1911', GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, *A Vision of Britain through Time*, <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/datavalue/687194>, accessed 3rd May 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Gareth A. Bevan, 'Dictionaries and Grammars [4] Welsh' in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia*, Volume I, A-Celti (California: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp.591-593, p.592.

<sup>4</sup> Christine Scull and Wayne G. Hammond, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion & Guide* (London: HarperCollins, 2006), p.51; Carl F. Hostetter, 'Languages Invented by Tolkien: Introduction' in Michael D.C. Drout (ed.), *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp.332-343, p.333.

The majority – 54% – of the library users were residing in Cardiganshire at the time of their visit(s), but they were not a representative sample of the Cardiganshire community, as most readers could be categorised as professionals or students, whereas the majority of residents in Cardiganshire during this period worked in agriculture.<sup>5</sup> Of the readers from Cardiganshire, 82% were actually living in the town of Aberystwyth itself. During the nineteenth century Cardiganshire's urban population had increased, therefore larger towns began to foster more diversified economies to support this growth.<sup>6</sup> Kathryn J. Cooper argues that this diversification was particularly true in the case of Aberystwyth, which branched out 'into tourism and education, [which] secured a stable though narrow economic base that nonetheless was accompanied by the growth of the professional classes.'<sup>7</sup> In the main, it is this narrow professional class that frequented the library, more often than not prompted by their connections to the university in their capacity as lecturers or students.

The ten most frequent users, as a group, visited the library 1,250 times, representing 40% of all visits made during this time period, all ten lived in Aberystwyth. To demonstrate the strong link between the library and the university, out of this group, two were lecturers and four were students. The remainder were national library employees, the inspector to the Royal Commission of Monuments in Wales, and a female reader of private means whose husband was a lecturer at the university.<sup>8</sup> Even though readers from outside of Cardiganshire frequented the library, this data highlights how the library's location affected how many could actually use it on a regular basis.

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<sup>5</sup> Of the 364 readers 48 could not be located due to a lack of information, so these percentages are based on the 316 whose locations are known. Kathryn J. Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.16.

<sup>6</sup> Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire*, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire*, p.15.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the higher education system in Wales during this period see E.L. Ellis, *The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth 1872-1972* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972); T.I. Ellis, *The Development of Higher Education in Wales* (Wrexham: Hughes & Sons, 1935); J. Gwynn Williams, *The University Movement in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993).

Males were in the majority and represented 86% of all readers.<sup>9</sup> A substantial number of the male readers were either teaching at school or university level, studying at university, or working as ministers in connection with non-conformist denominations. Unsurprisingly for this period, female readers were in the minority, but, allowing women to make use of the reading room was in line with other national libraries in Great Britain, including the British Museum Library where, in 1906, women represented approximately 20% of readers.<sup>10</sup> By 1909 women undergraduates were well established at Aberystwyth University, and, as a result, half of the female readers using the NLW during this period were students. The first woman had enrolled at the college in 1884 and by 1911 the all-female hall, built in 1896, contained 168 students.<sup>11</sup>

Similar to other public institutions of the time, women were in the minority, or entirely absent, on boards and committees and amongst the staff at the NLW. In addition, women only represented approximately 5-7% of the individual subscribers (1905-10) to the NLW building fund.<sup>12</sup> However, their presence as funders and users, even in the minority, is significant as it meant that particular groups of women were able to increase their involvement and influence in certain areas of national life. In the case of the NLW, the profile of the female user was not dissimilar from that of the male. Female users were generally students, teachers or women supported by private means, however, few female readers held lectureships. The female subscribers were, in the main, a similar demographic, but with fewer students and the presence of several businesswomen who did not go on to avail of the library's services in the analysed time period.

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<sup>9</sup> Out of the 364 readers 33 could not have their gender identified due to a lack of information, so these percentages are based on the 331 who are known.

<sup>10</sup> Ruth Hoberman, 'Women in the British Museum Reading Room during the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries: From Quasi- to Counterpublic', *Feminist Studies*, Vol.28, No.3 (2002), pp.489-512, p.494, p.506.

<sup>11</sup> Ellis, *The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth 1872-1972*, p.85; Find My Past Online (FMP), Census Ref: RG14PN33442 RD607 SD2 ED12 SN9999, 1911 Census for England and Wales, Alexandra Hall, Aberystwyth.

<sup>12</sup> This estimate includes the number of individual women who subscribed to the building fund and women who were included in joint subscriptions, either as wives or daughters.

Ruth Hoberman argues, when discussing the female users of the British Museum Library, that it enabled these women ‘to enact their identities as public intellectuals... the reading room offered a liberating opportunity to define themselves in relation to public discourse, as part of a quasi-public sphere.’<sup>13</sup> Like those at the British Library, the NLW’s female readers were participating in a national public space developing, what Hoberman describes as, a ‘vital female culture...all the more exciting and visible for its ambiguous role in the life of the nation.’<sup>14</sup>

It was predominantly a younger female generation who used the library, as almost two-thirds of the female readers were under thirty, unsurprising considering the high level of student users.<sup>15</sup> The most regular female user was Elizabeth Lloyd who visited the reading room 140 times, in fact Lloyd was the fourth most frequent user overall. In 1911 Lloyd was twenty-two and studying at Aberystwyth University from where she graduated with a first class honours degree in Welsh.<sup>16</sup> She was the daughter of a timber merchant from Llanilar, a village just outside of Aberystwyth, and she had been secretary of the Welsh library campaign committee when she was just sixteen years old.<sup>17</sup> In 1916, following a time studying in London and Oxford on a fellowship, she was appointed as a lecturer in Welsh and English at Bangor Normal College. Lloyd consulted 122 unique items during her visits which were often linked to the history of the Eisteddfod in Wales, which was the subject of a prize winning essay she wrote for the Wrexham Eisteddfod in 1912. Later, in 1928, she co-authored *Mynegai i Farddoniaeth y Llawysgrifau* (‘An Index to Poetry Manuscripts’) with Professor Henry Lewis. Like other readers, the access to manuscript collections previously held in private hands enriched Lloyd’s research. Her

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<sup>13</sup> Hoberman, ‘Women in the British Museum Reading Room’, p.503.

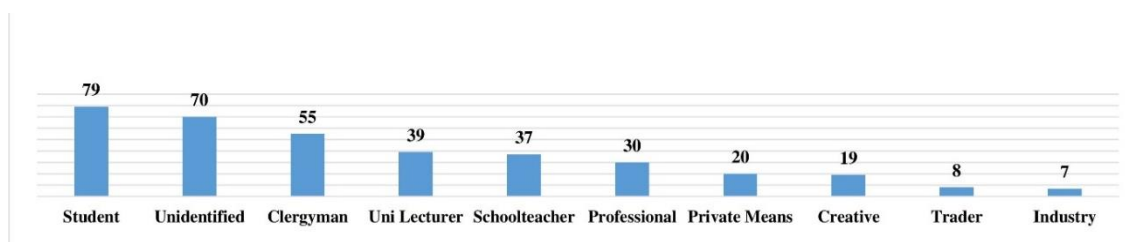
<sup>14</sup> Hoberman, ‘Women in the British Museum Reading Room’, p.491.

<sup>15</sup> 25 of the female readers are born after 1880. There are also 5 female readers whose dates of birth are unknown, but are listed as students so they can also be placed in the under-30 category. Therefore 30 out of 46 female readers can be placed in the under-30 category, equivalent to 65%.

<sup>16</sup> WBO, ‘Elizabeth Jane Lewis Jones (b. Elizabeth Jane Lloyd)’ (1889-1952), accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

<sup>17</sup> NLW Archive, MS 4476C, Welsh Library Appeal Committee Minutes 1903-1905, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1905.

use of the reading room and her completion of a degree at the university enabled her to have a position within academic circles in Wales and play an active role in national life, possibly unobtainable a generation before.



**Figure 5.1: Readers' Occupations in 1911**

**Source: NLW Archive, M3/230-31 Registers of Readers – Printed Books Department May 1909-August 1912; N4/1-2 Register of Readers and loans – MSS Department April 1909-September 1912; FMP, 1911 census data.**

Elizabeth Lloyd was one of many students who used the library and they represent just over a quarter of all readers during the period.<sup>18</sup> The majority of these students were attending Aberystwyth University with 90% of them living in Cardiganshire.<sup>19</sup> The proximity of the temporary NLW, which was situated just behind the college, and the strong connections between the NLW campaign group and the university, certainly had an effect on the readership of the library. In a sense, the NLW reading room was just an extension of the college library, as many of the items held by the university since the 1870s, in preparation for a permanent NLW, had been available to staff and students to consult previously.

Although students were using the library to access MSS, certain printed books and periodicals were also popular. The most widely used text by students was Thomas Stephens' *Literature of the Kymry*, with a quarter of the group consulting it at least once.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Out of 364 readers the professions of 70 cannot be identified. Therefore the percentage calculations are based on the 294 that have been identified. For example, 70 out of 294 readers are students which is equivalent to 27%.

<sup>19</sup> 71 of the 79 students were listed as living in Cardiganshire.

<sup>20</sup> Out of 79 students 19 consulted *The Literature of the Kymry* by Thomas Stephens.

A prize-winning eisteddfod essay written in 1848, *The Literature of the Kymry* was published in 1849. The author, Thomas Stephens, had received little formal education and owned a chemist shop, but his approach to the subject was scientific, and the book was regarded as a seminal work of Welsh literary criticism.

Stephens' aim was to rout out fictitious stories and wrongly attributed poems to give a 'rational account...with a view to their final settlement.'<sup>21</sup> He heavily critiqued *Myvyrian Archaiology Wales: Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts. Volume I. Poetry*, a formative collection of Welsh MSS material, first published at the beginning of the nineteenth century and edited by Owen Jones, Edward Williams and William Owen Pughe. Edward Williams ('Iolo Morganwg') had forged poems and placed them alongside genuine works which were then assimilated into Wales' literary canon and endorsed by the Welsh Manuscripts Society.<sup>22</sup>

Marion Löffler outlines the opposing schools of thought which developed following the publication of *The Literature of the Kymry*, particularly in relation to a perceived conception of Welsh national identity.<sup>23</sup> Some critics of Stephens such as James Harris, editor of the periodical *The Red Dragon: the national magazine of Wales*, argued that his work was dismantling popular Welsh traditions in favour, of what he deemed, dull facts. Supporters of Stephens' approach came from the burgeoning community of professional Welsh scholarship, including many of the NLW's first council such as John Rhys, John Morris Jones and John Gwenogvryn Evans who championed a scientific approach to history writing.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Stephens, *The Literature of the Kymry; being a Critical Essay on the History of the Language and Literature of Wales* (Llandovery: William Rees, 1849), p.vii.

<sup>22</sup> Marion Löffler, 'Failed Founding Fathers and Abandoned Sources: Edward Williams, Thomas Stephens and Young J.E. Lloyd' in Neil Evans and Huw Pryce (eds.), *Writing a Small Nation's Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.67-81, p.69.

<sup>23</sup> Marion Löffler, 'Failed Founding Fathers and Abandoned Sources', p.77

<sup>24</sup> Marion Löffler, 'Failed Founding Fathers and Abandoned Sources', pp.77-78.

Like Prys Morgan, Löffler argues that Wales suffered an identity crisis following the Blue Books report of 1847 which heavily criticised the Welsh education system.<sup>25</sup> The state sought to impose a more ‘scientific’ approach undermining traditional Welsh customs; therefore ‘[i]t would have been astonishing if Welsh scholarship had remained uninfluenced by this wider trend, particularly since for Wales cultural markers of nationhood stood in for the lack of the national institutions which England, and even Scotland and Ireland, possessed.’<sup>26</sup> In light of Löffler’s analysis, the establishment of the NLW likely strengthened Welsh national identity by remedying a previous disparity between Wales and other regions of Great Britain that already possessed a national library, diminishing a previous overreliance on unexamined customs. The NLW was a place where many more scholars than ever before could examine original MSS, whereas previously these documents were interpreted by a select few which, in the case of Edward Williams, could lead to misleading information going uncorrected for half a century. Ultimately, the NLW had been created by those who strived for a more rigorous approach to Wales’ history and who aimed to instil this particular version of Welsh national identity. The popularity of *The Literature of the Kymry* possibly demonstrates a shift in popular perceptions of national identity which focused more on historical facts and less on the romantic constructions of the nineteenth century.

The second largest user group at the NLW was men of religion. In the main, they were ministers who came from a variety of denominations, but were typically non-conformist. Just 38% were based in Cardiganshire, and around half of those men were living in Aberystwyth and the rest in the surrounding villages. Those religious men not residing in Cardiganshire, which was higher than the overall reader average, were spread

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<sup>25</sup> Prys Morgan, ‘The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period’ in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.43-100, p.93.

<sup>26</sup> Marion Löffler, ‘Failed Founding Fathers and Abandoned Sources’, p.70.

out across the other Welsh counties, predominantly in Carmarthenshire and Glamorganshire, and 15% resided in England.

These men consulted the Welsh-language MSS which had been made publicly assessable by the library. Their reading choices were principally of a historical, literary and religious nature, and they frequently consulted the numerous Welsh periodicals that were also available. Similar to other reader groups, the ministers' most popular reading material was the Peniarth and Llanstephan MSS, over a third of the group consulted these sets; although no individual part of the MSS collections were used repeatedly by the ministers.<sup>27</sup>

This group's selected reading material reveals how intertwined the religious non-conformist community was with academia and that Wales' literary heritage was also disseminated to a wider audience from the pulpit. Furthermore, the consultation of Welsh-language religious texts and sermons suggests that religious men may have used this material in their own teachings. This didactic mode of expression may have enabled the information contained in the library's collection to reach a broader demographic.

The minister who was the most frequent visitor of the group was William Rhys Watkin a Baptist who served as minister in Maesteg, Glamorganshire (1900-10) and then Llanelli, Carmarthenshire until his death. Born in Ynys-Tawe near Swansea, Watkin had begun work in the local colliery at the age of twelve, but after attending a school in Carmarthen for a short time went on to study at Bangor University, graduating with an honours in Welsh and then an MA in 1909.<sup>28</sup> Watkin was extremely active in the Welsh literary scene, later editing the periodical *Seren Gomer* during the 1920s and writing

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<sup>27</sup> The Peniarth and Llanstephan MSS were given to the NLW by John Williams. The collections are made up predominately of Welsh language MSS, including medieval Welsh prose and poetry.

<sup>28</sup> WBO, 'William Rhys Watkin' (1875-1947), accessed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016.



several parish histories. He was drawn to the arguments made by the Cymru Fydd movement and was a notable promoter of the Welsh language and literature.<sup>29</sup>

Watkin's reading choices tally with the historical reading material of a typical minister at the library, but, in contrast, his selection lacked religious texts. He extensively used the Peniarth MSS, requesting individual parts of this vast collection forty-nine times, some parts repeatedly. These included MS 99 'Poetry of Guto'r Glyn, Bedo Brwynllwys, Lewys Morgannwg, Huw Dafï and others' and MS 82 'Poems of Huw Arwystl'. Watkin wrote his MA on the poetry of Bedo Brwynllwys, so the consultation of his work and Brwynllwys' contemporaries during 1909 corresponds with Watkins' expanding interests. In terms of printed books, he requested the historical periodical *Archaeologia Cambrensis* several times and a number of texts relating to the history of South Wales including George Thomas Clarke's *Cartae et alia munimenta quae ad dominium de Glamorgancia pertinent* ('Charters and Other Muniments which Pertain to the Lordship of Glamorgan') which contained information on the genealogical history of the county.

Watkin's visits to the library occurred in four distinct blocks – the final time he visited during the period being analysed is in August 1910, when he stayed for around two weeks – which suggests that he was taking time out of his usual routine to visit Aberystwyth to study. It appears that although Watkin was a Baptist minister and was involved in many activities connected with the church he was also politically motivated to promote the Welsh language, history and literature, for example he held Welsh classes in Maesteg which was unusual for that time.<sup>30</sup> Therefore his attendance at the library and his choice of reading materials were connected to his study and promotion of Welsh literary identity, rather than furthering his own religious education.

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<sup>29</sup> WBO, 'William Rhys Watkin'.

<sup>30</sup> According to his entry on WBO he was President of the Union of Welsh Baptists (1939-40) and Chairman of the Baptist Missionary Society (1944-45).

Several of the minsters who used the library not only had other interests, like Watkin, but actually had other forms of employment outside of their religious duties. For example, the cleric Griffith Hartwell Jones was also a professor, first in South Wales and then at Jesus College in Oxford.<sup>31</sup> He visited the library for a three week period during the summer of 1909 and consulted the MSS collections of Llanstephan, Peniarth and Cwrtmawr. In 1912 he wrote *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement*, published by the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, which referred directly to the many MSS that Jones had consulted whilst at the library during the previous summer.<sup>32</sup> In his academic work Jones combined his religious knowledge with his interest in history, language, and literature, and, in one sense, it is difficult to separate these subjects, particularly in a Welsh context where religion and education were so entwined. However, Watkin and Jones' library attendance was motivated by academic pursuits and outputs whereas other clerics' reading material focused on their professional development within their religious roles.

A case in point is the clergyman William Jenkins Davies of St. Asaph in Flintshire who visited the library on 25th August 1911. He consulted nine titles on that day which were all of a religious nature and in Welsh: two biographies of particular reverends and seven collections of sermons. One was a book of the sermons of John John Roberts ('Iolo Caernarfon') who was well thought of as a preacher and public speaker.<sup>33</sup> Davies' reading choices could suggest that he was using the library to improve or invigorate his own sermons by consulting the work of ministers whose preaching was well regarded. In this instance, the library is being utilised for a very practical purpose rather than as a place to consult rare primary source material for academic objectives.

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<sup>31</sup> WBO, 'Griffith Hartwell Jones' 1859-1944, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Griffith Hartwell Jones, *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1912). For example he references Peniarth MS 104 on p.405 which he consulted on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1909 and Llanstephan MS 134 on p.307 which he consulted on 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1909.

<sup>33</sup> T.R. Jones, *Y Parchedig J.J. Roberts (Iolo Caernarfon)* (Caernarfon: Argraffwyd yn Swyddfa Argraffu'r Methodistiaid Calfinaidd, ?); WBO, 'John John Roberts' (1840-1914), accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

Although men such as William Jenkins Davies were not publishing works, the consulting of library holdings may have impacted on the contents of their sermons. The audience for these sermons was a minster's congregation, demonstrating again that the NLW is likely to have had more influence than the user numbers alone would suggest. To summarise, in most cases, the religious men who visited the library were interested in MSS and books connected to Welsh forms of religious practice; this research did not necessarily result in publications but had an audience nonetheless.

The third largest user group was university lecturers and of these thirty-nine academics almost two-thirds were based in Aberystwyth, fewer than the student group but more than the men of religion. The remainder were from other Welsh universities and three were from outside of Britain. In terms of their counties of birth, this group is probably the most diverse with only half the group born in Wales and several born outside of Britain. Similar to other groups, the lecturers read a predominance of Welsh history and literature, being 50% of items consulted, however, the subject matter of the rest of the selected material is generally more varied than other groups. There are books from the subject areas of geography, social sciences, law, education, music and art.

Timothy Lewis was an assistant lecturer in Welsh at Aberystwyth University under Edward Anwyl and was the most frequent user of the library out of all the readers who visited during this period. He consulted sixty-one unique items and visited the library 319 times. From humble beginnings as a miner he was able to gain a degree in Welsh while he was training to enter the ministry, and was then awarded a research scholarship working with Professor John Strachan, a renowned scholar of Celtic languages. During his academic career he was praised for his work on Welsh law, but criticised for some of his later research on the Welsh language. Lewis disagreed with John Rhys' approach to the analysis of the Welsh language, particularly the derivation of words and he also criticised John Morris Jones' work on the bardic system in Wales, as being misleading.

Lewis spent almost 90% of his time in the library consulting the primary source material from which the bulk of his written work derived: the Peniarth and Llanstephan MSS. He read large swathes of the collections but the file he repeatedly requested was Llanstephan 116 ‘Welsh Laws and Pleadings’. This research was likely in preparation for two publications: *The laws of Howel Dda: a facsimile reprint of Llanstephan MS. 116 in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth* which was edited by Lewis and *A Glossary of Mediaeval Welsh Law: based upon the Black Book of Chirk* published in 1913.<sup>34</sup>

The use of the library by university lecturers is unsurprising considering the building’s proximity to the college and the library’s deep-rooted connection to the academic community. The use of the library’s MSS collections by these academics, which often resulted in publications, concurred, in the main, with the founders’ intentions which was to make publicly available key historical texts for rigorous analysis. However, the consultation of other material beyond history and literature by this group demonstrated that there was potentially an audience for a more wide-ranging collection which the library failed to develop.

Thirty-seven of the readers were schoolteachers – the fourth largest group – and, unexpectedly, almost three-quarters resided outside of Cardiganshire, with some of the schoolteachers travelling relatively long distances to use the library from counties like Anglesey, Denbighshire, Lancashire, and even Hampshire. Only two of the schoolteachers visited the library on a regular basis – David John Saer and John Gravelle – and this is probably because they lived in Aberystwyth. The other schoolteachers tended to either visit just once or for blocks of times which often coincided with a particular holiday period. As a group, the schoolteachers consulted 299 unique items of which the

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<sup>34</sup> Timothy Lewis (ed.), *The laws of Howel Dda: a facsimile reprint of Llanstephan Ms. 116 in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth* (London: Henry Sotheran, 1912); Timothy Lewis, *A Glossary of Mediaeval Welsh Law: based upon the Black book of Chirk* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1913)

majority can be categorised as either literature or history. Within literature, the most popular titles were on the subject of early medieval Welsh writing, as well as related texts such as Charles Wilkins' *History of the Literature of Wales from 1300 to 1650*.<sup>35</sup> Within history, the focus was very much on the history of Wales, specifically local histories such as *History of the Parish of Llangynwyd* and *The People's History of Brecon (town and county)*.<sup>36</sup> There were hardly any books read by this group that dealt with the teaching profession, an exception was the *Welsh grammar for schools*, but these more practical books were a rarity.<sup>37</sup> It appears, in the main, that the schoolteachers used the library to study for qualifications such as university degrees, to carry out research for books that they were writing, or to study the history of their local area, which would be the subject of essays written for the Eisteddfod competitions. Therefore, they could be categorised as both teachers and students.

The schoolteacher who used the library the most during this period was Evan Owen James who worked at the County School in Aberaeron, so did reside in Cardiganshire. James spent the majority of his time consulting the two main manuscript collections at the library, Llanstephan and Peniarth, and other secondary material on Welsh history and poetry. In 1911 James completed his dissertation for a degree at Aberystwyth entitled *The unpublished poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi as found in the Peniarth Manuscripts*. James' visiting patterns suggest that he studied during the school holidays whilst working as a teacher, rather than studying full time. He would only use the library during the months of April, May, August and September, and usually for large blocks of time.

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Wilkins, *History of the Literature of Wales from 1300 to 1650* (Cardiff: D. Owen, 1884)

<sup>36</sup> T.C. Evans, *History of the Parish of Llangynwyd* (Llanelly, 1887); Edwin Poole, *The People's History of Brecon (town and county)* (Brecon: H.B. Wheeler, 1876)

<sup>37</sup> Edward Anwyl, *A Welsh grammar for schools: based on the principles and requirements of the Grammatical Society* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1897)

Of the thirty-seven schoolteachers who visited the library only two were born outside of Wales, so most had a connection to Wales even if they now resided and worked in England, moreover, 51% of the schoolteachers were born in either Cardiganshire or Carmarthenshire. An analysis of the schoolteachers' fathers' professions reveals the majority of this group had originated from working class backgrounds, with 68% of their fathers working as either traders, farmers or labourers.<sup>38</sup> For example, the elementary schoolteacher from Caernarvonshire William Gilbert Williams' father had worked as a quarryman and the headmaster from Aberdare's father had been a coalminer. Individuals from these occupational groups such as traders and labourers did contribute financially to the library building fund, but were extremely unlikely to use the library as readers. However, although the majority of the schoolteachers originated from these working class backgrounds it suggests they felt at ease with using the reading room and participating in this public sphere.

The teaching profession potentially offered a person from a working class background the chance of social mobility which, in turn, gave them perceived or 'unspoken' access to institutions such as the NLW. Neil J. Smelser in his writings on social mobility, or lack of, in British working class education in the nineteenth century, argued that schoolteachers "'crossed over" class lines in a society with a class system in which little crossing was usually expected...this was social mobility – elementary school teachers were of working-class origin but now occupied a kind of white-collar, middle-class role.'<sup>39</sup>

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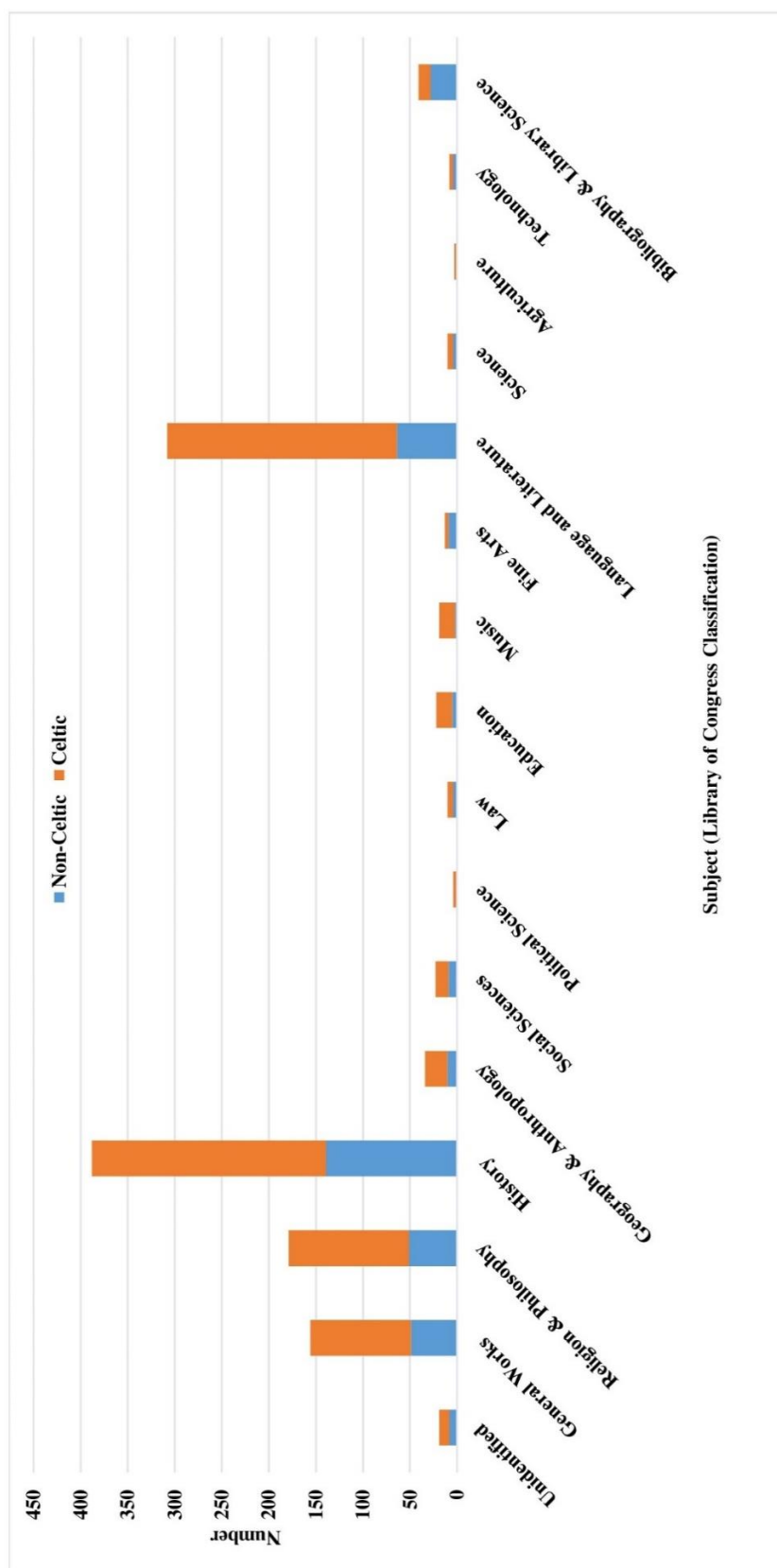
<sup>38</sup> This information on the schoolteachers' fathers' professions is drawn from earlier censuses and the breakdown is as follows: trader (11), professional (8), farmer (8), labourer (6), teacher (3), not found (1). Although the majority were living with their biological father on the census, there were two living only with their mothers, 1 with a stepfather and 1 with a grandfather. In these cases the guardian's profession was used.

<sup>39</sup> Neil J. Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp.296-297.

Even if their families were unable to afford for them to attend university, these individuals were able to train as pupil-teachers while still at school and then attend teacher training colleges thereafter.<sup>40</sup> Several of the schoolteachers visiting the library are listed on earlier censuses as pupil-teachers, including the quarryman's son William Gilbert Williams. Evidently some, like Edward Owen James, were keen to still obtain university level qualifications even if it meant studying alongside a full-time teaching post. The huge changes that occurred in the education system in the latter half of the nineteenth century, in a sense, had an impact on the demographic of library users. The introduction of the pupil-teachers and the professionalization of teaching at elementary level stimulated an increase in the professional classes. The NLW was essentially a symbol of national identity to the majority of the Welsh nation, but the ability to move from one social position to another, made available to schoolteachers in this period, enabled an emblem of national pride to become a practical and educational resource for personal development.

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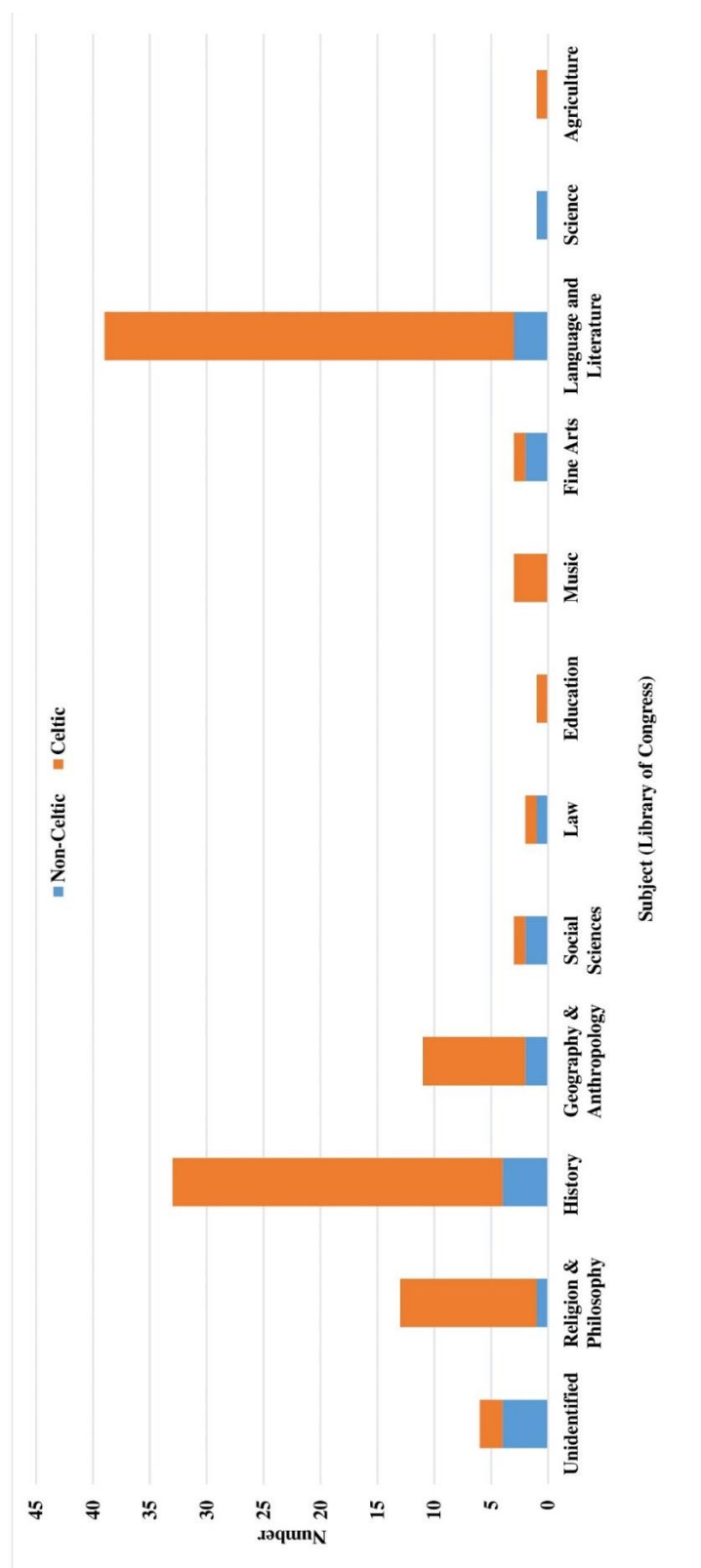
<sup>40</sup> Smelser, 'Chapter 9 New Roles: Pupil-Teacher, Teacher, Inspector' in *Social Paralysis and Social Change*, pp.296-347.



**Figure 5.2: Categorisation of the printed books (1238 titles), April 1909-August 1912.**

**Source:** NLW Archive, M3/230-31 Registers of Readers – Printed Books Department May 1909- Aug 1912; N4/1-2 Register of Readers and loans – MSS Dept Apr 1909-Sept 1912; NLW online catalogue.





**Figure 5.3: Categorisation of MSS, maps and prints (116 items), April 1909-August 1912.**

**Source: NLW Archive, M3/230-31 Registers of Readers – Printed Books Department May 1909- Aug 1912; N4/1-2 Register of Readers and loans – MSS Dept Apr 1909-Sept 1912; NLW online catalogue.**

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the breakdown of the printed books and MSS requested into categories in order to determine both the popular subjects and those which were least requested.<sup>41</sup> These figures relate to the library's buying policy, analysed in chapter four, as the majority of readers would have requested only what was available. Therefore, it is unsurprising that there is little science, agriculture, technology and political science requested as these categories were not well represented in the library's stock. In contrast, the popular subject areas amongst readers are the items that the council and then later the books committee recommended to purchase. There is little evidence available which records any reader requests, but book committee minutes indicate that if there were many requests few were acted upon.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of single items consulted, only 103 out of 1354 items were MSS (8%), but many MSS and books were consulted by multiple readers so MSS actually represented 11% of unique reader transactions, with printed books at 88% and maps and prints at just 1%.<sup>43</sup> Several broad patterns emerge from an analysis of readers' book requests during the time period. As demonstrated by figure 5.2, the most popular categories for printed books were general works, religion and philosophy, history, and language and literature. These trends are broadly reflected in the smaller sample of MS usage, with the exception of geography which includes the small selection of maps which were consulted by readers.

History, the largest category in printed books, contains 388 titles. The most popular book was *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and part of the Marches, between the*

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<sup>41</sup> These graphs are based on each individual item requested by a reader during the time period being assigned a Library of Congress categorisation. This data is not connected to the number of times an item was requested as each item is worth the same here.

<sup>42</sup> In 1913 the books committee refused to purchase a list of suggestions by readers. NLW Archive, D1/4, Books Sub-Committee Minutes 1912-1916, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1913, p.5.

<sup>43</sup> These statistics are based on unique reader transactions which logs each time a reader consults a new title, rather than counting every time a reader consults a title, regardless if they have requested it previously. This method produces a more accurate representation of an item's popularity amongst readers, otherwise a single reader consulting an item numerous times can skew the figures. There were 2,822 unique reader transactions altogether. Printed books: 2483, MSS: 312, Prints and Maps: 27.

*years 1586 and 1613* edited by Samuel Rush Meyrick in 1846. As discussed in chapter four, genealogical and heraldic texts were purchased by the library and it is evident that they were consulted by readers, quite extensively. It is likely that these titles were used in historical and genealogical research as *Heraldic Visitations of Wales* was used by various readers including students, schoolteachers and ministers. Other popular genealogical books included *Key to the Ancient Parish Registers of England & Wales* and *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage together with Memoirs of the Privy Councillors and Knights*.

The second largest category in printed books, language and literature, contains 305 books of which the most popular titles were *Literature of the Kymry*, *Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, *Works of Lewys Glyn Cothi*, *The Eisteddfod Transactions*, *Antiquae linguae Britannicae* (also known as Dr John Davies's Grammar), *Iolo Morganwg Manuscripts* and *The Black Book of Carmarthen Facsimile*. These titles represent several distinct aspects of Welsh society during this period and link to the cultural reawakening outlined by historians such as Prys Morgan.<sup>44</sup> During this period the study of Welsh literature and history was increasingly professionalised which was prompted, in part, by the development of the university sector in Wales. There was a new rigour to the work of academics such as John Gwenogvryn Evans and Edward Anwyl which led to a re-examination of eighteenth-century writings on subjects such as Welsh poetry in an attempt to separate the fact from the fiction. Also, during this period, the Eisteddfod had become another avenue to discuss ideas and present work on many areas of Welsh cultural heritage which were then published in the many volumes of transactions. The development of Celtic studies, pioneered by the likes of John Rhys, and the study of Welsh philology within a wider context of other Celtic

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<sup>44</sup> Morgan, 'The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', pp.43-100.

languages led to an increase in publications. The subsequent international development of this discipline created outlets for this work in the European journals such as *Revue Celtique* and others.

The library's remit was to curate a Celtic collection. The data demonstrates that readers requested more Celtic-themed items, the split being 70-30, which focused predominately on Welsh-themed material. Books were also read on the subject of other Celtic languages and other Celtic people, a condition stipulated in the library's charter, however the requests were relatively limited. Approximately fifty titles requested are connected to other Celtic people and languages outside of Wales, including Breton, Cornish, Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

However, some of the most popular titles were the periodicals including *Celtic Review*, first published in 1904, which aimed to encourage interest in Celtic literature and *Revue Celtique*, founded in 1870, which was the first journal to be dedicated to Celtic Studies, focusing particularly on Celtic philology. Other popular titles included John Rhys's *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* and Baring-Gould and Fisher's *Lives of the British saints; the saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish saints as have dedications in Britain*, both authored by library council members. Within the Llanstephan, Peniarth and Cwrtmawr collections were several Cornish MSS including Geirlyer Kyrnweig, a Cornish dictionary compiled by the scholar Edward Lhuyd which is considered to be an important source for the Cornish language. However the dictionary was only consulted once during the period, and the other Cornish MSS not at all.

The reading of these burgeoning Celtic-focused academic journals shows the interest and continued development of the professional study of Celtic languages particularly in Welsh universities. The majority of titles requested within this subject area were related in some way to Wales and the Welsh language, but few focused on any other specific Celtic language or country. Of course the library was in its infancy at this point

and these collections have been developed during the twentieth century through donations and some purchases, but not consistently. Therefore it is worth considering whether the library overreached itself in terms of catering for a Celtic nation rather than just a Welsh nation, or if this was a selling point during the campaign period which then later was included in the charter. There is evidence in the readers' data of an appetite to compare Welsh with one or more of the other Celtic languages, but the location of the NLW likely prevented many scholars from other Celtic nations from travelling to use the collections, such as the Cornish MSS. In addition, the positioning of the Welsh language at the centre of a study or taken as a starting point could be viewed as part of the identity construction process, of which the establishment of the NLW was a core part.

In short, the subject areas prioritised by the library created a collection with an innate bias which had an impact on the type of material that was consulted in the reading room. The library did not encourage reader requests and even when they did occur they were usually rejected due to a lack of funds. Therefore the library was, to a point, able to shape the reader experience which must have had some impact on the types of MSS researchers chose to analyse and to publish on. However, this particular focus on Wales' history and literature was certainly not unpopular, as many users' aims for a NLW were aligned with those of the founders.

## **II. Workers' Educational Association Book Box Scheme 1914-1916**

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 1912 the Court of Governors passed the following resolution:

That the Court requests the Council to consider and report upon the manner in which the resources of the Library could be made available for the assistance of Tutorial Classes, mainly for working-men in Wales.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> NLW Archives, A3, Court of Governors Minutes 1907-1916, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1909, p.27.

In response Ballinger prepared a report highlighting the purpose of the WEA classes, which was to introduce working men to one or more areas of serious study.<sup>46</sup> He described the role that the library could play in providing books to these classes via a book box scheme and how this could be achieved under the library's charter. In order to comply with library policy he cited the following section of the charter:

the National Library provides for "the creation and maintenance of duplicate and multiple specimens and collections to be lent and used from time to time for the purpose of exhibition and instruction at or in connection to the said Colleges and other educational institutions existing in Wales, and the preparation and circulation for instructional purposes of photographs and slides of such specimens and collections." [Ballinger's quotation marks]<sup>47</sup>

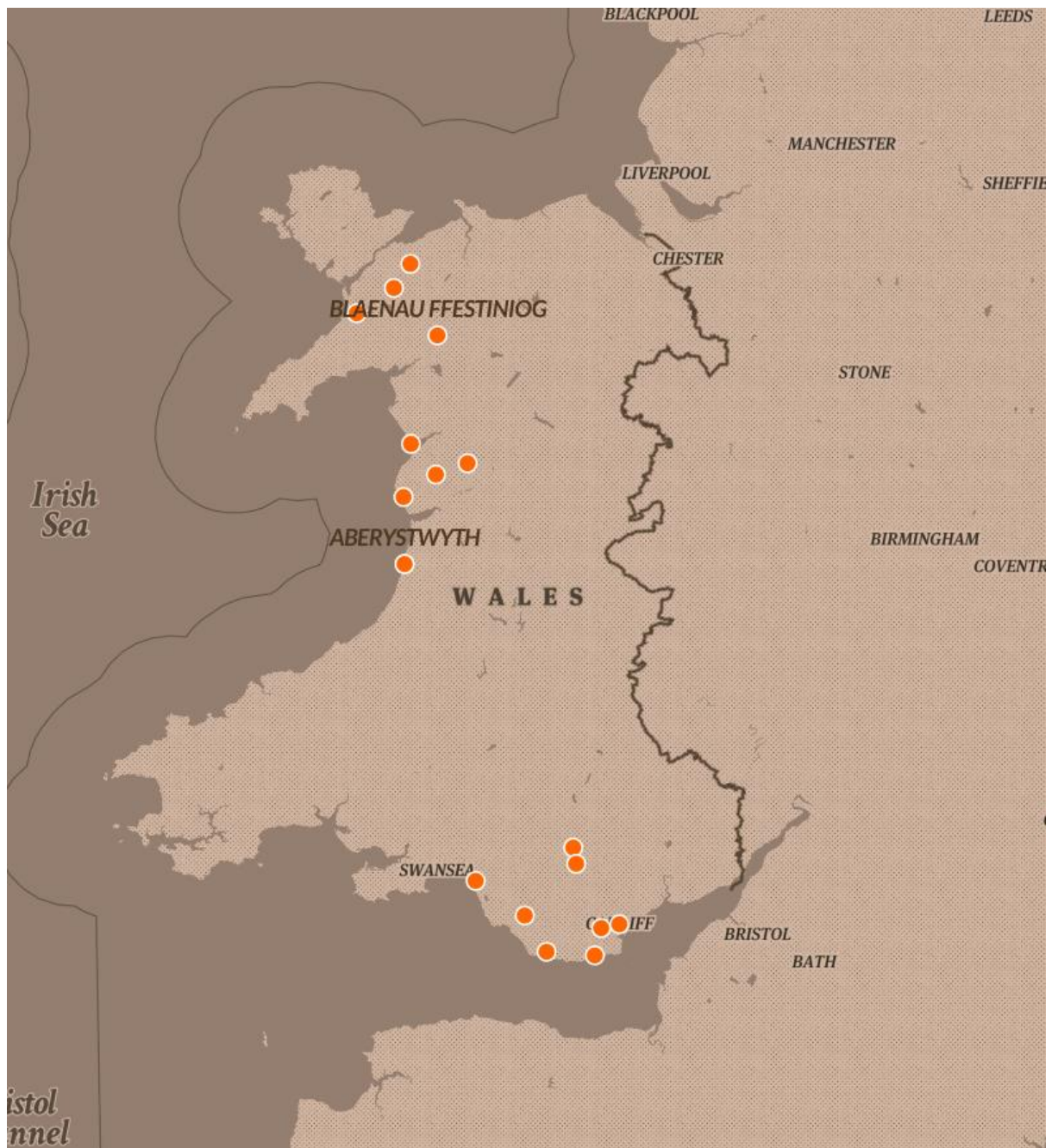
The original purpose of this section of the charter was to enable the library to occasionally provide items for exhibitions and reading material to colleges. It was also a way to placate those who criticised the isolated location of the library for everyday study. It is difficult to pinpoint whether the idea to utilise this part of the charter came from Ballinger or the chairman of the WEA in Wales and NLW court and council member Daniel Lleufer Thomas. Nonetheless, it was a shrewd repurposing which enabled the book box scheme to operate within the library's existing remit.

The report listed eighteen places (see Figure 5.4) where classes were operating in Wales and Monmouthshire – ten in the south and eight in the north – all studying economics or economic history, bar one in Aberystwyth which was studying Welsh literature.

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<sup>46</sup> John Ballinger, *Report on the suggested loans of books from the National Library for the use of students in the tutorial classes organised by the Workers Educational Association* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1913), p.1.

<sup>47</sup> John Ballinger, *Report on the suggested loans of books*, p.1.



**Figure 5.4: The geographical spread of the first eighteen classes, January 1914.**

**Source: NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16.**

In his report Ballinger sketched out how the scheme would work: a class would be sent a box of books which they would then exchange with another class in the district, and then at end of the session the books would be returned to the NLW. It had been requested by John Thomas, the organising secretary of the Welsh district of the WEA, that seven classes be prioritised – in the north Llanberis, Penygroes, Aberllyfenni, Tywyn, Barmouth, Abergynolwyn and in the south Llantwit Major – due to a lack of public library services in the majority of these areas, so it was these classes that first trialled the scheme in 1914.<sup>48</sup>

The WEA had been founded in England in 1903 and then in Wales in 1907 to provide university standard education for working class people, which would offer students the chance to apply for university after completion of a course. Classes were usually taught by a qualified professional and contained, on average, around thirty students. A course would last three years with twenty-four two hour classes, annually.<sup>49</sup> The organisation's chairman in Wales, Daniel Lleufer Thomas, supported the development of the book box scheme, and was keen to provide a service particularly to the people of south Wales whose library building fund subscriptions he had collected. The book box scheme was also supported by court and council member Professor John Edward Lloyd who co-ordinated some of the tutorial classes from the University of North Wales in Bangor. Lloyd, like Thomas and Ballinger, was keen to get the scheme started as he was aware that 'the provision of books [was] one of the more difficult problems connected with these classes.'<sup>50</sup>

Richard Lewis argued that

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<sup>48</sup> NLW, L5/1, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Wales Correspondence File, Letter from John Thomas the organising secretary of the Welsh district of the WEA, Aberdare to Ballinger, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1913.

<sup>49</sup> Frederic Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics: challenging the mainstream in the twentieth century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p.104.

<sup>50</sup> NLW, L5/1, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Caernarvonshire File, Letter from John Edward Lloyd, Bangor to Ballinger, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1914.



[t]he WEA in Wales evolved in the context of the traditional democratic culture that revered learning and literacy, founded in large measure on a predominant tradition of non-conformist, chapel-based religious observance...It fostered and reinforced the growth of largely untutored book learning.<sup>51</sup>

Although the WEA in Wales developed on the back of a legacy of self-education, fostered in the Welsh chapels, initially, teaching was not conducted through the medium of Welsh. WEA classes first developed in the urbanised south-east of Wales which was predominantly English-speaking, as a result of the influx of workers from other areas of Great Britain. As Lewis outlined, the WEA appealed to the self-improvement ethos of non-conformity, however, it did not engage with the Welsh-speaking communities of rural Wales, but the anglicised south. In contrast to the NLW, the WEA committee members were more often business types and not drawn from Welsh literary societies.<sup>52</sup>

Of the first eighteen classes which were sent boxes only one was studying Welsh literature, which was in Aberystwyth, and only three out of twenty-four titles on the economics class booklist were in Welsh.<sup>53</sup> Although the lack of Welsh language texts may not have been an issue in the south it was a concern in the north where classes were beginning to develop. This matter was discussed in a letter from J. Morgan Rees, an organiser of some of the North Wales classes, who emphasised to Ballinger the importance of Welsh books being made available at the Abergynolwyn and Aberllyfenni classes, which Rees described as ‘the Welsh centres’.<sup>54</sup> The disparity between the demand for Welsh language titles at classes in the north and south demonstrates how different these areas were becoming during this period, and how the influx of non-Welsh speaking

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<sup>51</sup> Richard Lewis, ‘The WEA and Workers’ Education in Early Twentieth Century Wales’ in Stephen K. Roberts (ed.), *A Ministry of Enthusiasm. Centenary Essays on the Workers’ Educational Association* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), pp.198-214, p.198.

<sup>52</sup> Lewis, ‘The WEA and Workers’ Education’, p.199.

<sup>53</sup> John Ballinger, *Report on the suggested loans of books*, p.2.

<sup>54</sup> NLW, L5/1, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Merionethshire File, Letter from J. Morgan Rees, Aberystwyth to Ballinger, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1913.

workers had resulted in English becoming the shared common language in these more industrialised areas.

The first booklist was produced for the economics syllabus which was being taught, in some form, at seventeen of the first eighteen classes. In his essay on the book box scheme Chris M. Baggs focuses more on its development post-1918 whereas the current work analyses the development and early workings of this scheme. However, Baggs does suggest in his introductory section that the books on the 1913 list were entirely of Ballinger's choosing, but this claim cannot be substantiated.<sup>55</sup> It may be the case that Ballinger did put together this selection himself after being informed of the theme of the classes, but letters sent to him before his report was published indicate that some information may have been provided. For example John Thomas and J. Morgan Rees both enclosed items with their letters, unfortunately now missing, such as a copy of a travelling library catalogue, a register of books lent to students, and a list of books suitable for general reading.<sup>56</sup> Also the economic historian Frederic Lee, in his discussion of the WEA and Marxism, clarifies that the WEA had specific books assigned to their economics classes of which four books, mentioned by Lee, can be found on Ballinger's list.<sup>57</sup> The twenty-four titles listed in the report are described by Ballinger as 'the books suggested as most desirable' with the price of each text listed. The cost was likely an influencing factor as the library was funding the scheme.<sup>58</sup> Almost all of the titles can be categorised as political and social science, except for the novel *Looking Backwards* by Edward

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<sup>55</sup> C.M. Baggs 'The National Library of Wales book box scheme and the South Wales Coalfield' *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.30 (1990), pp.207-229, p.211.

<sup>56</sup> NLW, L5/1, Wales Correspondence File, Letter from John Thomas to Ballinger, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1913; Merionethshire File, Letter from J. Morgan Rees to Ballinger, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1913.

<sup>57</sup> Frederic Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics*, p.104. The four books that are also included in Ballinger's list are Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1890 (London: Macmillan, Third edition, 1895) Henry Seager, *Introduction to Economics* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1904) Edwin Seligman, *Principles of Economics, with special reference to American Conditions* (New York: Longmans, Green and co., 1905) and Charles Gide (Translated by Edward Percy Jacobsen), *Principles of Political Economy* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1891)

<sup>58</sup> John Ballinger, *Report on the suggested loans of books*, p.2.

Bellamy: a science fiction story which imagined America as a socialist utopia in the year 2000.

The list included three classic texts: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Economics* (1848) and Karl Marx's *Capital* (1867). All of the other titles had been published after 1880, including a handful in the first decade of the twentieth century such as Edwin Seligman's *Principles of Economics: With Special Reference to American Conditions* (1905) and R.C.K Ensor's *Modern Socialism* (1904), an edited collection of speeches, writings and programmes. The selection covered the main principles of economics, industrial history, trade unionism, capitalism and socialism. The Welsh language titles – these might have been selected by Ballinger – included a biography of the Welsh utopian socialist Robert Owen, *Y Werin a'i Theyrnas* ('The People and their Kingdom', 1910) by the Labour Unionist David Thomas, and *Sosialaeth* ('Socialism', 1911) by Rev. D. Tudwal Evans.

The WEA booklists were in contrast to the items consulted in the NLW reading room by the largely middle class and professional readership with an interest in history and literature. The WEA scheme appears to have a distinct left-wing bias with the inclusion of a number of socialist and Marxist texts. However, according to Frederic Lee, the WEA promoted Alfred Marshall's supply and demand theory, outlined in his book *Principles of Economics*, above other texts. Lee argued 'that Marshall's theory was depicted as "objective truth"' in that no fundamental criticisms of it were presented and discussed' by WEA tutors, and that Marxist theory was presented as scientifically inferior.<sup>59</sup> The labour theory of value was rejected in favour of neoclassical economics. More importantly, Lee argued, that radical and revolutionary socialism was rejected: 'the socialism desired was that of the individual and the education that was received made the

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<sup>59</sup> Frederic Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics*, pp.104-105.

tutorial students feel alive intellectually but did not lead the individual to study Marxist theory'.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, just exposing students to these left-wing texts risked them becoming drawn to these more revolutionary theories. WEA tutors could never entirely manage these risks, as Roger Chartier argued 'reading is not simply submission to textual machinery'.<sup>61</sup> Central and local government instructed the WEA to be vigilant and tutors were often kept on short-term contracts so they could be dismissed promptly if the promotion of radical literature was suspected.<sup>62</sup>

The WEA scheme in Wales in partnership with the NLW does not entirely conform to Lee's depiction. As highlighted, the booklists for the classes in Wales contained many of the texts that the WEA recommended, but what was actually sent out offers a less uniform picture, as not all of the classes received the exact list published in Ballinger's report. For example, Barmouth was the only town to borrow Marx's *Capital* and they also took Webb's *History of Trade Unionism*, Ensor's *Modern Socialism*, the selection of Welsh texts, but curiously no Marshall. Ynysybwl borrowed seven from the NLW's list but also requested Langford Price's *A Short History of Political Economy in England* and Frederick Pollock's *An Introduction to the History of the Science of Politics*. The classes in Abergynolwyn, Aberllyfenni did not take Marshall or Marx but did take, as J. Morgan Rees had predicted, all of the suggested Welsh texts which had a strong left-wing bias.<sup>63</sup> Several of the other towns also took one or two Welsh languages texts, but this was mainly confined to the North Wales classes, exceptions were the southern towns of Ynysybwl, and Llantwit Major. Once again this 'pick and mix' approach suggests that

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<sup>60</sup> Frederic Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics*, p.106.

<sup>61</sup> Roger Chartier, 'Texts, Printing, Readings' in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp.154-175, p.156.

<sup>62</sup> Lee, *A History of Heterodox Economics*, p.106.

<sup>63</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Abergynolwyn and Aberllyfenni booklists, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1914.

the outsourcing of book provision to the NLW allowed the classes a greater freedom of choice which did not necessarily conform to the WEA's preferred reading combinations and could be interpreted as an act of subversion by the users.

There is no evidence that the NLW attempted to police or monitor the classes' reading choices and instead endeavoured to fulfil their requests if it was financially feasible. In addition books supplied by the NLW may have had an influence beyond the classroom environment, particularly as the NLW allowed students to take books home to read at their leisure. This privilege enabled unsupervised reading of potentially radical literature which could be discussed in other forums beyond the classroom and accessed by family members. In his article on the scheme, Baggs emphasised the important role the NLW played in supplying textbooks to students who could not access them otherwise, however, he neglected to compare the scheme in Wales with the wider WEA organisation. This comparison reveals the uniqueness of the WEA experience in Wales during this period as tutors and students curated their own reading, aided by the NLW's lending policy.

There is a stark contrast between the books that were consulted in the NLW's reading room and the selection for the WEA classes. Very few titles from either social or political sciences were requested at the library, as readers primarily focused on Wales' medieval and early modern literature and history. Yet, in the first WEA classes that used NLW books the focus was predominantly on the industrial age, economics and modern politics. As an early industrial nation, Wales had played a significant role in the preceding half a century, in economic terms, therefore the WEA reading material may have offered the attendees the opportunity to understand Wales' position within an international context. However, it is more likely that discussions focused on Great Britain as a whole into which Wales was assimilated, as the first WEA book box represented an outward-

looking approach to the study of economic history which likely would have acknowledged Wales' role, but did not position it at the centre.

The library charter dictated that before a book was sent out at least two copies had to be purchased so one could remain in the library. Therefore these books were not just available to the tutorial class participants, but also to the library user via the public catalogue. A number of texts were not stocked by the library until the classes began, therefore, the remote library users were inadvertently shaping the library's main collection. This practice indicates that the development of the library's collections were not just initiated from the top down by those running the library, but that they were also shaped from the bottom up by the library's remote users. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that the remote user had more influence on shaping the library's collection than those readers in attendance whose requests were declined due to a lack of funds.

Although it is unlikely that Ballinger compiled the first booklist for the economics class there is evidence, in later correspondence, that he did compose reading lists himself in response to a particular theme or subject. For example, at the end of 1914, T.I. Mardy Jones contacted Ballinger as he was conducting a class for approximately twenty-five miners at the Ferndale and Labour Institute in the Rhondda Valley on the subject of the industrial history of Great Britain.<sup>64</sup> Jones requested twelve books to be sent of Ballinger's choosing, with the proviso that 'some of them are very well read and able students.'<sup>65</sup> Ballinger actually sent seventeen books in all including A. Hasbach's *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer* (1908), Ernest Bennett's *Problems of Village Life* (1914) and Brougham Villiers *The Socialist Movement in England* (1908). These titles focused, in part, on the important role agriculture played in the economy and

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<sup>64</sup> NLW, L5/1, Glamorgan File, Letter from T.I. Mardy Jones, Treforest to Ballinger, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

<sup>65</sup> NLW, L5/1, Glamorgan File, Letter from T.I. Mardy Jones, Treforest to Ballinger, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

the social conditions of the countryside, however, the selection focused primarily on a more general English experience. It is odd that Ballinger did not send any volumes that focused on the Welsh involvement considering the freedom given to him by Jones, and that John Edward Lloyd had written specifically on the history of Welsh agriculture.<sup>66</sup> Even a volume such as H. Stanley Jevons' *Foreign Trade in Coal* (1909), part of a University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire series, may have been more relevant to the experience of the Ferndale mine workers.

Following the outbreak of the war classes began to study its origins and impact and requested that Ballinger select the books. Owen Thomas from Llantwit Major sent a letter to Ballinger in December 1914 thanking him for 'the fine selection, you have chosen for us' and John Thomas requested 'a box of books dealing with the present war in accordance with your suggestion' for the Owain Glyndwr Institute of Young Men's Society in Machynlleth.<sup>67</sup> Ballinger provided both classes with a wide selection which ranged from the evolution of Germany, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and France, as well as the origins and warnings of the war. These book boxes offered a student a complex picture of the war including its origins in the nineteenth century and its impact on Britain. The war book boxes reveal the freedom classes had to request items on a particular subject that they were interested in and the accessibility they had to new textbooks which would have been unaffordable to the majority of students. For Ballinger it was an opportunity to curate challenging and thought-provoking collections that had the potential to offer students the chance of social mobility, as he himself had experienced. Where Ballinger's personal choices can be examined it usually suggests his prioritisation of the promotion

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<sup>66</sup> J.E Lloyd, *Early Welsh Agriculture* (Bangor: Jarvis & Foster, 1894)

<sup>67</sup> NLW, L5/1, Glamorgan File, Letter from Owen Thomas, Llantwit Major to Ballinger, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1914; NLW, L5/1, Merionethshire File, Letter from John Thomas, Machynlleth to Ballinger, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1915.

of self-education and personal advancement, rather than the promotion of a Welsh national identity.

Barmouth, in the county of Merionethshire, was one of the first towns to receive a book box from the NLW after being prioritised by John Thomas because of its lack of public library facilities. The box provided to Barmouth, on the suggestion of Ballinger, was swapped with the nearby groups in Aberllyfenni and Abergynolwyn, but a letter sent to the library indicates that the tutors were unclear where the box was and who should return it at the end of the session.<sup>68</sup> It appears from further correspondence later in the year that Ballinger attempted to remedy the situation by asking the local endowment subscription library if they would accept the books and supply them to the students, which the library agreed.<sup>69</sup> However, in February 1915 Chas J. Dempsey, the class tutor, and J. Morgan Rees wrote to Ballinger several times to request if the box could be moved to the county school as the students would not go to the subscription library, even though the library committee had agreed to admit them without charging the annual fee of 2/6.<sup>70</sup> This incident reveals that the majority of the students – Dempsey indicated that only two students had used the book box while it was held by the library – felt alienated by the subscription library and likely wanted to use the books on their own terms, instead of being permitted access to them as a charitable gesture. As Barmouth did not have a public library the NLW book box, located in the neutral space of the county school, provided the students with a free and un-stigmatised library service. This incident demonstrates that the NLW was beginning, at this point, to develop a national outreach service which

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<sup>68</sup> NLW, L5/1, Merionethshire File, Letter from J. Gelly, Barmouth County School to Ballinger, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1914.

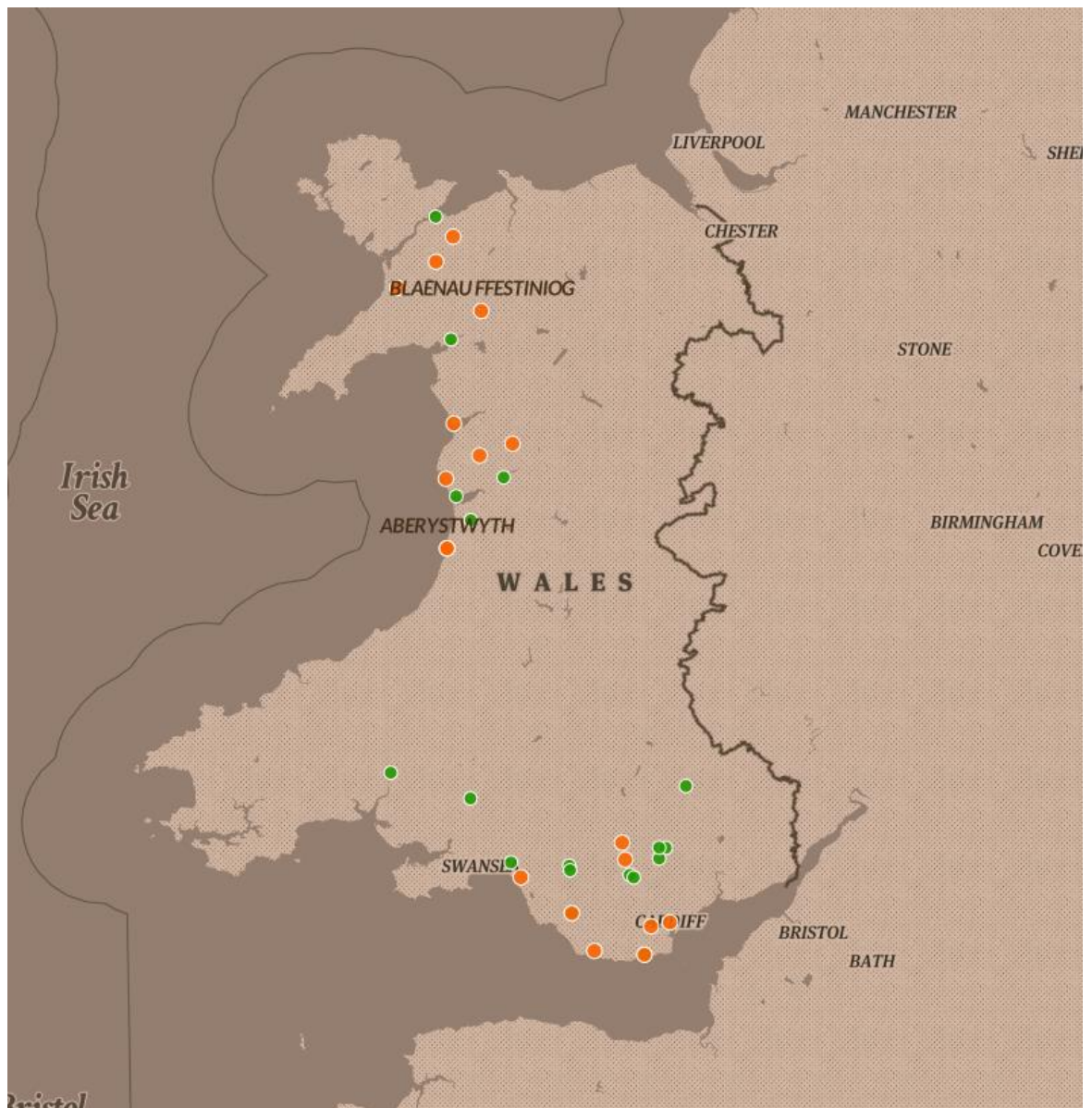
<sup>69</sup> NLW, L5/1, Merionethshire File, Letter from J.T Jones, Barmouth Library to Ballinger, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

<sup>70</sup> NLW, L5/1, Merionethshire File, Letters from Chas J. Dempsey, Barmouth to Ballinger, 15<sup>th</sup> February 1915 and 19<sup>th</sup> February 1915.



gave members of the Welsh nation, regardless of background or status, the opportunity to access educational materials via a service that was free at point of use.

The first book boxes were sent out in January 1914 and then another batch was sent out six months later. By the end of 1916 approximately thirty-six groups were receiving a book box and Figure 5.4 reveals which areas of Wales benefitted the most.



**Figure 5.5: The geographical spread of all the classes, 1914-1916**  
The first wave of classes are represented by the orange markers and the second wave by green.

Source: NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16.

South Wales was sent the most book boxes; this was due to the south being heavily populated by workers at this time, so more WEA classes were started and maintained. Also, as the scheme developed during 1914, classes would teach the same subject so book boxes could be swapped with other groups rather than returning them to the library. This element of the scheme may have led to new groups starting up within a reasonable distance of another class to benefit from this lending scheme.

The first wave of boxes dispatched were all part of the WEA programme, but from mid-1914 other groups also requested boxes. For instance, the library sent a book box to Eirene Lloyd Jones from Barry, who was a member of the Cardiff and District Women's Suffrage Society, for their discussion group.<sup>71</sup> The group requested twenty titles including biographies of Florence Nightingale, Ellen Key, Octavia Hill and Josephine Butler, also, Lady Bell Black's *Women in Industry from Seven Points of View*, George Gissing's *The Odd Woman* and Helena Swanwick's *The Future of the Women's Movement*.<sup>72</sup> Although it is not made clear how they found out about the book box scheme it is likely that they were aware of the WEA class in Barry which had been one of the first classes to receive a box. The NLW's willingness to provide books for other groups, beyond WEA, meant that an even greater variety of Wales' residents actively benefitted from the library's services. This is particularly relevant in relation to the Suffrage Society as the WEA predominantly catered for working men during this period. A wider demographic of women, outside of the female students using the reading room, were able, as Hoberman argued, 'to enact their identities as public intellectuals' as well as access writings on the subject of female emancipation, which consequently would have also been made available via the library's public catalogue.

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<sup>71</sup> NLW, L5/1, Glamorgan File, Letter from Eirene Lloyd Jones, Barry to Ballinger, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1914.

<sup>72</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Cardiff and District Women's Suffrage Movement, Barry, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1914.

The classes outside of the WEA framework studied quite a wide variety of subjects. For instance, the Literary Society in Pontypridd studied Russian literature, borrowing several Tolstoy novels, and two Secondary Technical School classes in Newport and Pengam studied the history of Greece.<sup>73</sup> It was really only from these other groups that books relating to Wales were requested. In November 1913 a box was sent to the Cymdeithas Ddiwylliadol ('Cultural Club') in Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire which included a biography of George Borrow, Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Wales*, two books about Percy Shelley living in Wales, and two collections of Welsh language poetry by Ben Bowen.<sup>74</sup> This book box most closely reflected a typical NLW reading room user's material, but was an anomaly when compared with the other book boxes.

In December 1914 some of the classes who had first received a book box now requested a second. The outbreak of war six months earlier had a significant impact on the type of books requested. For example, Llantwit Major and Barmouth's second boxes only contained a couple of titles relating to the original economics syllabus, and, instead, were dominated by books connected to the outbreak of war. Books included were Norman Angell's left-leaning book *The Great Illusion* (1910) which argued that war was economically damaging to all countries involved, members of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History's *Why we are at War Great Britain's Case* (1914) and Andrew Carnegie's *Armaments and their Results* (1909).<sup>75</sup> The first boxes sent to Llantwit Major and Barmouth had contained some Welsh titles but the reading material in the second boxes was even more focused on Great Britain and its role within Europe. The need to read about, discuss and understand the origins of the war and its effects is evident in

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<sup>73</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Literary Society in Pontypridd, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 and Secondary Technical Classes Pengam and Newport, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1914.

<sup>74</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Cymdeithas Ddiwylliadol Penrhyndeudraeth, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

<sup>75</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Llantwit Major 8<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and Barmouth 7<sup>th</sup> December 1915.

almost all of the requested boxes during this period from Port Talbot in the industrial south to Machynlleth in the rural heartlands.<sup>76</sup>

If thirty-six groups received a box in the first two years of the scheme and each group had an average of thirty participants – based on the WEA numbers – the scheme had the potential to reach over a thousand individuals. The WEA classes mainly catered for coal miners, carpenters, railwaymen and teachers.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore the NLW also provided books to the WEA Bangor Summer School from 1914 which was attended by students from different parts of the UK.<sup>78</sup> The 1913 summer school had 124 attendees, so, based on this figure, the NLW may have reached another 150-250 people by sending books to the summer schools over the following two years, taking into account the impact of the war.<sup>79</sup> These numbers represent only the first two years of a fledgling scheme hampered by the start of the war which impacted upon funding and class attendance. Baggs' study analysed the scheme in its later years and he discovered that its activities steadily increased after the end of the First World War. By 1930 over three hundred classes received boxes and over eight thousand volumes were distributed.<sup>80</sup> Baggs estimates that 100,000 students used NLW books, 1918-38.<sup>81</sup>

Press reports give an indication of how the scheme was received. An article in the *Cambrian Leader* from 1914 on 'Swansea and the National Library' declares that the Book Box Scheme 'overcomes the site problem' enabling those 'who, for want of time,

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<sup>76</sup> NLW, L5/2, Loans to WEA and University Tutorial Classes 1912-22, Checked Booklists 1914-16. Boxes that contained books on the war included Aberdovey, Llanelly, Carmarthen, Ammanford, Barmouth 7<sup>th</sup> December 1914, Port Talbot, Llantwit Major, Briton Ferry 8<sup>th</sup> December 1914, Machynlleth 15<sup>th</sup> December 1915.

<sup>77</sup> A tutor lists the type of people attending his classes. NLW, L5/1, Monmouthshire File, Letter from J.Owen, Blackwood to Ballinger, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1916.

<sup>78</sup> NLW, L5/1, Caernarvonshire File, Bangor Summer School Leaflet by Joint University Tutorial Classes Committee, Manchester 1914. The summer schools ran for 6 weeks during July and August and registration was 2/6 then 22/6 per week for full board. Scholarships were available and rail fares provided. Letter from John Thomas, Aberdare to Ballinger, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1915. This letter stated that the NLW sent 110 volumes to the 1915 summer school.

<sup>79</sup> NLW, L5/1, Caernarvonshire File, WEA North-Western District Report, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1913. This was the first summer school they ran with 124 attendees (98 men and 26 women).

<sup>80</sup> Baggs 'The National Library of Wales book box scheme', p.210.

<sup>81</sup> Baggs 'The National Library of Wales book box scheme', p.217.

want of means, or lack of urgency, are unable to visit the Library.’<sup>82</sup> In 1915 the *Cambrian News* reported that the loaning of books to ‘isolated places’ in Wales will enable the NLW ‘to thus become the People’s University.’<sup>83</sup> Although the scheme appeared relatively late on the NLW management’s agenda, in many ways the library achieved as much socially via this scheme as it did through the reading room.

The scheme enabled the library to reach an increasing number of Welsh citizens, approximately 1,200 over two years, even though the library itself was relatively isolated. Through the scheme the NLW began to cater for, what Gwyn A. Williams described as, the [f]ragmented and divergent societies...propelled along different historic routes and into different historic time scales’ as a result of the boom in industrial capitalism, particularly in South Wales.<sup>84</sup> The Adams report of 1915, showed that 54% of Wales’ population lived in an area that did not provide public library facilities (in England it was 38%). The book boxes provided a public service which was free at point of use in areas where opportunities to access educational textbooks was limited. These class attendees – not typical users of the library reading room – began to define their role within Welsh cultural life through their use of the NLW as a practical service, rather than just as a symbolic emblem of Welsh national identity.

### **III. National Library of Wales Book Box – Ruhleben Camp, Berlin 1915**

In early 1915 the library was involved in a national scheme called ‘Books for Troops’ which made reading material available to soldiers. Ballinger had become aware of a scheme called the Camps Library, which was the brainchild of Sir Edward Ward who had been permanent secretary at the War Office. Ward had begun by establishing lending libraries for overseas contingents, and then at the end of 1914 set up a central depot in London from which books and magazines were distributed. These books were sent to

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Swansea and the National Library’, *The Cambrian Leader*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1914, p.4.

<sup>83</sup> ‘National Library of Wales’, *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1915, p.4.

<sup>84</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Black Raven, 1985), p.182.

soldiers fighting at the front, but also to those based in training camps across Britain. The scheme relied on donations from the public, so Ward and the honorary secretary of the Camps Library, Eva Anstruther, urged the newspapers to report on the scheme's progress, in order to encourage more donations.<sup>85</sup>

John Ballinger was involved in setting up a 'Books for Troops' sub-committee for Wales and by mid-February 1915 he had managed to secure five thousand books from the Camps Library.<sup>86</sup> These books were delivered to the NLW and then distributed to reading rooms in Aberystwyth, but also to other towns in Wales where troops were stationed: two hundred were sent to Newtown, five hundred to Pembroke Dock and a thousand to Llandudno.<sup>87</sup>

The 'Books for Troops' project is striking because of the sheer volume of books it managed to distribute as, at a minimum, it required 75,000 items each week.<sup>88</sup> However, it was a blanket approach and relied on the public to donate interesting, desirable material. In contrast, troops stationed at training camps in Wales as well as receiving Camps Library books were encouraged to send in their book requests to the NLW on specially designed postcards.<sup>89</sup> The men were able to borrow a particular book which would be sent to them at the training camp and then they would be expected to return it to the library within fourteen days. The scheme was a time-consuming operation as it involved collecting, sending and checking-in books, as well as monitoring the ones that were late, but the library evidently deemed it a worthwhile operation to provide a personal service tailored to the reader's requirements. Men would have been able to request books that

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<sup>85</sup> NLW, X1/5, Folder (iii) Books for Prisoners of War – Misc. Notes and Printed Matter, Books for the Trenches. Sir Edward Ward's Appeal reprinted from the Daily Telegraph, January 28<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>86</sup> NLW, X1/5 Books for Troops 1914-18, Folder (i) Letters relating to Books for Troops in the UK 1914-18, Books for Troops Committee Agenda, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1915.

<sup>87</sup> NLW, X1/5, Folder (iii) Books for Prisoners of War – Misc. Notes and Printed Matter, National Library of Wales Military Department, 1915 – List of towns and number of books sent to each place.

<sup>88</sup> Theodore Wesley Koch and Arthur E. Bostwick, 'Books in Camp, Trench and Hospital', *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, Vol.11, No.4 (1917), pp.103-108, p.105.

<sup>89</sup> NLW, X1/5 Books for Troops 1914-18, Folder (iv) 135 book request postcards from soldiers in Welsh training camps 1915.

they actually wanted to read, including Welsh language titles, rather than having to rely on the lottery of the book box. This service mimicked that offered by the public library and, importantly, it was a service that treated the men as individuals in a time when their own identities were being eroded, as they were increasingly defined by their participation in the war.

In September 1915 Principal Roberts at the university in Aberystwyth received a letter from a former student, Tom Williams, who was being held at the Ruhleben internment camp in Berlin.<sup>90</sup> Williams explained that a Celtic Society had been formed at the camp in the February of that year, as ‘very little was done to organise anything which could be of use and benefit to the Celtic element here.’<sup>91</sup> So, Williams along with four other UCW graduates had decided to start a movement which would cater for the seventy Welshmen who were being held there.

The Ruhleben Camp was a racecourse which had been converted into an internment camp in November 1914 to house approximately five thousand British men. These prisoners had either been resident in Germany, visiting, or working at sea in territorial waters at the outbreak of the war. In fact, Tom Williams in his letter to Principal Roberts declared that two-thirds of the seventy Welshmen at the camp were seafaring men.<sup>92</sup> These men had been interned following the breakdown of negotiations over the return of German civilians held in Britain. This internment was a reactive and retaliatory act and was presumed at the time to be only a temporary measure, however, the majority of these civilians remained at the camp until Armistice in November 1918.

It is important to emphasise that Ruhleben was the only civilian detention site in Germany and did not contain POWs, therefore, even though there were some new arrivals

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<sup>90</sup> NLW, X1/5 Books for Troops 1914-18, Folder (iii) Books for POWs, Germany folder, Letter from Tom Williams, Ruhleben Celtic Society to Principal Roberts, UCW, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1915.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Tom Williams, Ruhleben Celtic Society to Principal Roberts, UCW, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1915.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Tom Williams, Ruhleben Celtic Society to Principal Roberts, UCW, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1915.



over the four years, the members of the camp remained pretty constant. This consistency led to the development of long-term activities such as a library, a camp magazine, theatre productions, a postal service, clubs, societies, and a school. The 'Prospectus of Work' for the Ruhleben school in September 1916 shows that their activities resembled a micro-university with a general and subcommittee, term dates, membership cards, public examinations – endorsed by academic institutions back in Britain – and a huge variety of subjects available to study including languages, science, arts and handicrafts.<sup>93</sup>

Williams stated in his letter that:

I have already approached the authorities of the camp school and a Celtic section has been formed to include at our suggestion classes on Elementary and advanced Welsh, Cymric and Irish Literature. I have also been round various barracks and find that the lessons now given can only be supplemented by a small number of part song pamphlets containing Welsh texts, a few Welsh Grammars, a dictionary and a Welsh bible or two. All the men are keen and I am sure that with a little help from the people at home we can give many here a good serviceable knowledge of our language and of our various institutions.<sup>94</sup>

The Welsh members only represented 1.4% of the camp's population and British identity dominated, for example the paths and squares of the camp were named after famous London areas such as Trafalgar Square.<sup>95</sup> Therefore it is likely that the Welsh internees' motivation for requesting Celtic related reading material was to highlight their collective sense of national identity, in what were extremely isolating circumstances, but as a group they were almost keener to use the opportunity to disseminate information about their culture and their language. Matthew Stibbe, in his book on the Ruhleben camp experience, argues that 'the prisoners at Ruhleben needed to construct an identity for themselves based on notions of continuity with the past and future framed within a

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<sup>93</sup> 'Ruhleben Camp School Prospectus of Work for Autumn Term 1916, In Ruhleben Camp Collection, Aberystwyth University, <http://cymru1914.org/en/view/journal/4006055>.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Tom Williams, Ruhleben Celtic Society to Principal Roberts, UCW, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1915.

<sup>95</sup> Matthew Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp 1914-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p.84.

language and culture that fostered a collective sense of purpose.’<sup>96</sup> The Welsh internees looked to Wales’ national institutions, such as the UCW and NLW, to provide books that would offer that connection to the past, not just as an isolated act of nostalgic remembrance for the Welsh prisoners, but as a tool for shaping the future of a disparate community coming together with the shared purpose of educating each other. Williams concluded by asking

Could you Sir, approach the Celtic Society at the College or else any wealthy Welshmen who would be prepared to send us a selection of books. Perhaps the students have some books which they no longer require all that is necessary is that they should be Welsh books dealing with the language, literature, eminent Welshmen, Welsh Histories (these of course may be in English), Poems, Histories of the University and the Eisteddfod.<sup>97</sup>

Principal Robert contacted Ballinger and enclosed a list of people he had asked to make either a financial contribution or a donation of relevant books and these items were dispatched to Ruhleben by mid-November 1915.<sup>98</sup>

The final booklist shows that 260 unique titles were collected so, including multiple copies, the total number of items sent was 1460.<sup>99</sup> Donations came from individuals, societies and publishers which created an eclectic mix of material to send to the camp. There were songs, hymns, dictionaries, grammars, Welsh learner guides, biographies, poetry, histories and religious texts, with the majority of the books in Welsh.

As well as collecting and dispatching the donated books to Ruhleben the NLW also chose and purchased some books themselves to be included. In total, the library

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<sup>96</sup> Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, pp.79-80

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Tom Williams, Ruhleben Celtic Society to Principal Roberts, UCW, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1915.

<sup>98</sup> NLW, X1/5 Books for Troops 1914-18, Folder (iii) Books for POWs, Germany folder, Letter from Principal Roberts, UCW to Ballinger, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1915, Letter from Roberts to Ballinger, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1915.

<sup>99</sup> NLW, X1/5 Books for Troops 1914-18, Folder (iii) Books for POWs, Germany folder, List of books sent to Alfred T. Davies, Board of Education for the Welsh prisoners at Ruhleben.

contributed thirty-seven items of which twenty-two were unique titles.<sup>100</sup> Three of the books were sent in multiples of six: *The Scholar's Welsh Dictionary* published in 1900, *Folk Songs No.1* and *Folk Songs No.2*. Almost 65% of the items selected by the library were music related even though in the original appeal letter from Williams he made no requests for music to be sent. In fact he highlighted 'that the lessons now given can only be supplemented by a small number of part song pamphlets containing Welsh texts', but did not request any more and specifically asked for Welsh books dealing with the language, literature, and history. Therefore it was the library that decided to send a substantial amount of Welsh music which was in addition to the selection already donated by the public.

The NLW's selection offers an insight into the library's perception of Welsh national identity during this period, as they were providing the Ruhleben camp with a 'Welsh toolkit' in order to disseminate the language and the culture of Wales to a new audience. The *Scholar's Welsh Dictionary* and a two-part tutorial Welsh course are obvious choices to supplement the language classes, but the inclusion of so many song pamphlets chosen over other reading material stands out. The selection was a mixture of Welsh folk song and national song which reinforced the traditional image of the Welshman as poet and singer.

Williams' letter gave the impression that they were adopting an academic approach to learning within a university-style framework, rather than just trying to evoke a sense of connectivity within the existing Welsh group at the camp. Stibbe argues 'that there was a certain up-to-dateness or topicality about the cultural life in Ruhleben which gave it an inclusive, vibrant and at times subversive edge...national/imperial reference points were intermixed with more immediate/personal concerns which...draw our

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<sup>100</sup> The books chosen and purchased by the NLW to send were calculated by subtracting the lists of donated items from the original list. All lists are in Folder (iii) Books for POWs, Germany folder.

attention to the importance of the human and intimate element in the process of community formation more generally.<sup>101</sup> Williams requested Welsh titles, but the group are viewing themselves as part of an interconnected, larger whole, as Stibbe's argued, they 'construct[ed] an identity for themselves'.<sup>102</sup>

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Comparing the key reader groups using the NLW during this period has revealed starkly different user experiences. An isolated evaluation of the reading room users suggests the library had a small and narrow demographic confined, in the main, to the professional classes residing in Cardiganshire. The requested material was restricted to specific subject areas which focused primarily on Welsh history, language, literature and religion. However, when the data from all three groups is analysed collectively a broader picture emerges, one that incorporates more users particularly from working class backgrounds residing across Wales. Requested material is more wide-ranging often looking beyond Wales including future-focused subjects like economics and international relations, predominantly in English.

The founders and library management's vision for the NLW, defined in chapter four, was reflected in the reading room usage. But then the items requested by the readers had been, to a point, curated by the founders with few opportunities available for users to request new material. Many readers came from similar backgrounds to the founders and it is likely that their motivation for using the library as an academic resource aligned with the founders' intentions. However, requests by some for more wide-ranging materials suggests that broader collections, if available, may have been utilised.

In the reading room, requests suggest that the library was principally viewed by users as a Welsh library rather than a wider Celtic archive. It could be argued that this

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<sup>101</sup> Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, pp.103-104.

<sup>102</sup> Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, p.79.

perspective actually aligned with that of the founders, as there was relatively little attempt to create a Celtic library and many of the founders were products of a specific Welsh cultural nationalism. In contrast, the internees' experience at Ruhleben had led them to embrace a Celtic identity which was not acknowledged in the library's response.

Some members of the library's management envisaged being involved in some way with adult education, outside of the library, but, generally speaking, the patterns of remote use challenged the management's initial vision for the library. For the most part, books requested were in English and did not deal with Welsh history, literature or religion. In contrast to the experience in the reading room, the book box choices were often entirely self-curated, as a result of Welsh WEA classes requesting books directly from the NLW. Even when the WEA's chosen titles were available, classes would pick and choose the titles and subjects they wanted, which led to a distinctly left-leaning bias. In addition, all of the book box choices had to be available in the public catalogue, so the remote users had more influence on library stock than those in the reading room. In contrast, the NLW were able to curate the Ruhleben book box and the choices reflect the founders' initial vision for the library and are closer to the reading room experience. The NLW chose materials that reinforced a particular version of Welsh cultural nationalism, even though the internees requested items that had a more practical purpose.

The NLW's decision to engage with remote users helped to counteract the library's relatively isolated location which, in the main, served only Cardiganshire and the surrounding counties, with a few individuals prepared to travel and stay in Aberystwyth for study. This engagement also increased the numbers of users, with the WEA and other classes reaching approximately 1,200 readers. Since the beginning of the library campaign the library founders' main focus was the conservation of MSS and the development of a reading room which served a limited number of users, but these users were reaching others with their work. Alternatively the book box scheme – not high on

the agenda at the beginning – connected with a greater breadth of people overall. During the NLW's first ten years as an institution it gradually developed broader access schemes and a greater sense of social utility.

In essence, when the library had the opportunity to curate a reading experience they attempted to reinforce a particular version of Welsh national identity which was predicated on the history, language, literature and religion of Wales. However, the advocates of this Welsh cultural nationalism, who were rooted in the Welsh academic community, were seeking to interpret the source material now available to them to create a more robust version of the literature on which this identity rested. Despite the library's bias, readers still sought to create a personal reading experience which was most successful for the users of the book box scheme. The NLW, to an extent, democratised Welsh scholarship and provided opportunities for social mobility, whilst influencing readers across a wide range of constituencies in a variety of different ways.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has split the National Library of Wales' (NLW) development into three key stages: conception, formation and operation, in order to provide a critical re-evaluation of this institution within a national context. The aim of this study was at each stage to determine the effect of external factors, identify influential individuals, evaluate the level of public engagement and, as far as possible, ascertain the influence of concept(s) of Welsh national identity on the development process. A further aim of this thesis has been to show how the social, political and cultural shifts in Wales during this period shaped the development of the NLW and to interrogate the role national libraries can play in the process of nation-building.

Through this investigation three key groups who interacted with the NLW have been identified as the library transformed from a concept into an operational institution: the founders, the subscribers and the users. A detailed survey of these participants and of the broader, social, cultural and political contexts in which they operated has uncovered a history of the NLW which differs from the existing institutionally-focused histories. This thesis has sought throughout to understand why and in what ways individuals interacted with the NLW during the various phases and to what extent the concept(s) of Welsh national identity may have influenced their decisions and actions.

Three broad conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the NLW. First, in contrast to the historiography on the NLW, this campaign cannot be categorised as a widespread mass movement but, instead, as an elitist project which reflected a small group's personal interests and vision of Welsh national identity. Second, in their role as curators of a national collection these elites chose to select material which fitted into their preferred version of the nation's memory which was not necessarily a broad representation of Wales. Third, this deliberate selection process dictated what was consulted in the reading room and influenced the type of research being conducted.

However, this vision for the library was challenged following the introduction of the book box scheme and the ensuing interaction with a sizable group of remote users. This group represented multiple Welsh identities and, on the whole, they viewed the library as a practical educational resource and a way to learn about contemporary issues, rather than primarily as a preserver of Welsh history and culture.

This conclusion is divided into two key sections. The first examines the principal findings from this study with a view to addressing the main research questions proposed in the introduction. The second interrogates some of the broader issues surrounding memory institutions and national identity and how studies such as this thesis – which position libraries within a wider context – can lead to a more nuanced understanding of their purpose, potential for manipulation as well as who and what these institutions come to represent.

## **I. Re-evaluating the National Library of Wales**

This section tackles the key questions proposed at the start of the thesis by drawing together the principal findings from the preceding chapters to re-evaluate the genesis and development of the NLW within a national context, c.1840-1916.

In order to interrogate the reasons why the concept of a NLW emerged during the mid-nineteenth century it is vital to consider the impact of the development of industrialisation in Wales during this period. This swift modernisation threatened the existence of the agricultural societies which had previously dominated and permanently altered communities, landscapes and the Welsh language. The concept of a NLW appears to represent this dichotomy between old and new. As Gwyn A. Williams argued, once threatened, the identity of the more traditional Welsh-speaking parts of Wales was strengthened by the existence of this new industrial and anglicised sphere. In turn, this industrialisation provided much of the funding for these new Welsh national institutions



which bolstered the notion that Wales was marginalised and neglected by England in political and cultural terms.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1860s, this marginalisation of Wales was the key motivation behind establishing Welsh national institutions, as middle class technocrats wanted to define Wales as an equal nation within the union of Great Britain. These proposals were not about innovation, but were more a process of mirroring English cultural institutions, which were signifiers of an established nation. However, the planning of national institutions required a 'national' discussion, as previously the idea of a NLW had only been debated by various Welsh interest groups in isolation. An English-language social science forum, established in 1861 as part of the revamped and anglicised National Eisteddfod, was a significant milestone, as it provided an appropriate place to debate these proposals within a national context.

Following a key discussion at the Eisteddfod in 1873, the first concrete proposal for a NLW was developed which led to the University College of Wales (UCW) in Aberystwyth assuming some responsibility for building a national archival collection. The opening of the UCW in 1872 represented the type of nation-building that mirrored English institutions. It showcased what could be achieved as it was a product of the industrialisation of Wales funded by new Welsh industrialists such as David Davies who now had the financial means to fund large-scale national projects.

However, this group of Welsh middle class technocrats, who were responsible for the founding of a higher education system in Wales and the laying of the foundation for a NLW, were future-focused in their approach and believed that Anglicisation was the path to progress. These men were not looking back nostalgically to the rural Wales of the past, but instead saw the integral part Wales could play in the future of industrial Britain. They were Welsh patriots but aimed to emulate the English national structure by creating

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<sup>1</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Black Raven, 1985), pp.180-181.

institutions that solidified Wales' status as a nation. At this point, the NLW was destined to follow this model where the emphasis was placed on its role as a nationalistic symbol and building block of Welsh nationhood rather than as a cultural repository.

Day and Suggett argue, that during the 1860s and early 1870s there was an ambivalence towards the Welsh language from a number of these influential Liberal elites as the 'worth' of Welsh could not be identified within their chosen progressive model.<sup>2</sup> As chapter two demonstrates, the vision of the library as a purely nationalistic symbol and a lack of interest in Welsh culture were not conducive to the NLW's development. However, this group's determination to establish official signifiers of a Welsh nation inadvertently laid the groundwork for institutions that would, from the 1880s onwards, become vehicles for the expression of Welsh cultural nationalism.

A key factor in the progress of the NLW was an increased appreciation in the 1880s for the Welsh language and culture as the discipline of Celtic studies burgeoned across Europe. The higher education system in Wales began to offer Welsh as an academic subject and Celtic societies were founded at English and European universities. Key to the NLW's development was the membership of the Welsh Dafydd ap Gwilym society founded at Oxford by Aberystwyth graduates whose members went on to play influential roles in the political and cultural sphere in Wales.

Similar to the technocrats of the 1860s, these individuals were a product of the politically active non-conformist chapels and were Liberal-leaning with an interest in education. However, in contrast they had spent their intellectually-formative years in academic institutions which classified the study of the Welsh language and culture as an academic subject. This shift in how the Welsh language and culture were perceived at

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<sup>2</sup> Graham Day and Richard Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness: Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Wales' in G. Rees, J. Bujra, P. Littlewood, H. Newby and T.L. Rees (eds.), *Political Action and Social Identity Class, Locality and Ideology* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.91-115, p.110.

universities created a generation of intellectual elites who envisioned the NLW as an intrinsic part of academic progress in Wales.

The image of Wales that emerged from this intellectual sphere was based on studies that were primarily 'looking back' to shed light on Wales' historical narrative and the origins of the Welsh language. As Adamson argues, the result was an identity that was constructed around the concept of the pre-industrial society of the *gwerin* which left little room for other Welsh identities.<sup>3</sup> As the discipline of Welsh and Celtic studies flourished, the image of the *gwerin* was propagated further and began to infiltrate the new Welsh cultural institutions as these young men of the 1880s approached middle age and assumed positions of influence.<sup>4</sup>

These Welsh intellectuals were also politically active in the British Liberal party and developed specific Welsh legislation which was brought before parliament, including the museum grants issue which, eventually, led to the establishment of the national museum and library. This legislation was developed during a period of intense political nationalism in Wales which promoted home rule, epitomised by the Cymru Fydd movement. Although short-lived, the fusion of Welsh cultural and political nationalism was a catalyst for change as it brought specifically Welsh issues to the fore, which forced the British government to view Wales as a distinct nation like Ireland and Scotland. Although, as Adamson argues, the desire for Welsh independence quickly dissipated in the political arena, the nationalist fervour of this movement continued to be pursued in the cultural sphere.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The direct translation of *gwerin* is ordinary folk, populace, the peasantry, but during this period it was a term used to describe the native and rural Welsh communities who represented the 'true' Wales.

<sup>4</sup> David L. Adamson, 'The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales' in R. Fevre and A. Thompson (eds.), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), pp.48-68, p.67.

<sup>5</sup> David L. Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), p.123.

In summary, the early stages of the campaign (both in the 1860s and 1890s) were driven by a few key individuals. Both groups were committed to promoting Wales politically by securing iconic national institutions. However, those involved in the 1890s were also deeply committed to promoting Wales culturally and were perhaps more inspired by a purely 'Welsh' national identity rather than a 'British' identity, which was more popular in the 1860s. These conditions were more favourable in terms of establishing a NLW as it combined political influence, a cultural renaissance, and enthusiastic donors with a certain class-based nationalistic fervour.

Chapter three explored the fundraising campaign for the building of the NLW which offered an opportunity to evaluate the level of public support for the establishment of a NLW. The evidence revealed that the involvement of the wider public in the NLW campaign occurred only as a result of the government's request for each potential host-town to demonstrate the level of local and widespread financial support in their application. As chapter two established, this government request was motivated not by a desire to gauge the appetite of the Welsh nation for national cultural institutions but, instead, to be able to calculate how low they could realistically set the museum grant.

Nonetheless, this assessment does not necessarily undermine the pledges of approximately 1,500 individuals to the building fund up to 1910 who evidently engaged with the concept of a NLW and the nationalistic literature that was created by the campaign organisers. Although this campaign demonstrates that some members of the public were receptive to the idea of contributing to this national project they were, for the most part, aggressively targeted with fundraising materials often specifically tailored to their situation and background. Therefore, the NLW campaign cannot be categorised as a popular movement and, like Day and Suggett's assessment of the educational lobby in Wales, the NLW was not a bottom-up movement but a top-down approach orchestrated

by intellectual elites.<sup>6</sup> The wider public were appealed to only when the middle classes were unable to resolve the situation themselves.

It has been established that the NLW campaign was largely an elitist pursuit fuelled by a determination to make accessible a Welsh archival collection (as a number of those involved were Welsh academics) and a desire to bolster Welsh national identity through the creation of official institutions. This thesis has argued that those involved in establishing and managing the library sought to instil a particular version of Welsh national identity, a form of top-down nationalism.

One might argue that the founders of the NLW were not consciously seeking to deliberately build national identities but, instead, were unconsciously influenced by their own backgrounds and interests, which, in most cases, were heavily weighted towards the study of Welsh history, religion and literature. On the whole, the founders and management's conception of Wales was relatively narrow, and this is reflected in the purchasing choices that were made.

This behaviour concurs with Adamson's observation that the Welsh intellectuals' direct involvement in certain fields (e.g. literature, historiography, language) aided the development of a version of Welsh national identity which drew upon their intellectual outputs and positioned the intellectual community at the centre of nation-building projects.<sup>7</sup> To use Brown and Davis-Brown's expression, the NLW's selection processes enabled those involved to become 'manufacturers of memory and not merely the guardians of it.'<sup>8</sup> Anthony D. Smith's ethno-symbolism model provides an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the role the library management played in the

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<sup>6</sup> Day and Suggett, 'Conceptions of Wales and Welshness', p.111.

<sup>7</sup> Adamson, 'The Intellectual and the National Movement in Wales', p.49, p.58.

<sup>8</sup> R.H. Brown and B. Davis-Brown, 'The making of memory: the politics of archives, libraries and museums in the construction of national consciousness', *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol.11, No.4 (1998), pp.17-32, p.22.

(re)construction of Welsh national identity.<sup>9</sup> The findings of this study suggest that the founders and management of the NLW selectively drew on pre-modern identities to shape their version of Welsh heritage, according to the view of their select group.

However, John Ballinger brought a 'public library' ethos from his previous job as head librarian of Cardiff Free Library. Like Cardiff, he viewed the NLW as a collection hub: a place where people could bring everyday documents and objects to be archived which may, in the future, come to have historical significance. He also attempted to broaden the selection by suggesting the library purchase more ephemeral material which documented the social history of Wales, which was adopted in several instances. Ballinger's work at Cardiff Library had significantly increased usage levels and his direct involvement in the 'Books for Troops' scheme and the box book initiative demonstrates that he was determined to increase public engagement with the library facilities at a national level.

In summary, those involved in the campaign and, later, the management of the library were keen to impose their particular interpretation of Welsh historical traditions and national identity in order to create a NLW which served their specific needs. These needs were generally related to academic pursuits but were also connected to a desire to preserve the Wales of the *gwerin* which was threatened by the industrial boom. However, these motivations limited what was being preserved as the official national memory and created a collection that did not represent the multi-faceted nature of Welsh society in the early twentieth century. The actions of individuals such as John Ballinger attempted to counter this relatively narrow approach and, in hindsight, his collection policy on ephemeral materials is regarded as trailblazing.

The latter half of the thesis gauged how the founders' approach to curating a collection affected the library users and determined if there was any leeway for the user

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)

to be an active agent in shaping the reader experience. The decision to analyse three distinct user groups rather than just those using the reading room enabled a broader picture of library usage to emerge.

The reading room usage reflected the founders and library management's vision for the NLW which is unsurprising as their choices were confined to the available catalogue and few reader requests were fulfilled. Also many of the readers were members of the political and cultural elite and their interests aligned with those of the founders.

The material sent to the internees in Ruhleben is another example of a library-curated reading experience. The books and pamphlets chosen for the internees by the library reinforced a particular version of Welsh national identity which was quite nostalgic and patriotic. In contrast, the internees' correspondence suggested that a broader Celtic identity had been cultivated within the camp with an emphasis on disseminating knowledge as part of a wider university-style framework. The books from the NLW were meant to facilitate this shared purpose of education rather than used merely as a tool to strengthen Welsh identity at the camp.

The WEA book box scheme introduced a new type of reader to the library who was less interested in Welsh material and more interested in modern subjects such as economics which often had an international slant. As a result of the rules of the duplicate system these remote users, in contrast to the reading room users, inadvertently became active agents in shaping the library's collection as a large percentage of their requests had to be purchased and be made available via the public catalogue.

These remote users indicate that there were alternative identities developing in Wales that were very much 'looking forward' as part of the industrialisation process. The material available in the reading room failed to cater for this 'new' Wales as individuals from this background were not represented on the buying committees at the library. On the surface it looked like the court and council were demographically and geographically

diverse, but in reality many of these appointments were symbolic and attempted to convey the image of a more representative institution. As a result, up until 1914, with the introduction of the book box scheme, only select constituencies and groups were catered for by the NLW rather than the library operating as a truly all-encompassing national institution.

In short, within the library the management, in the main, controlled what was available to users. It was the remote readers connected to the book box scheme who were able to wield the most influence out of all the user groups in shaping the library's collection. This scheme indicates that from 1914 the library, under the guidance of John Ballinger, was beginning to develop ways of broadening access to educational facilities in Wales rather than being, purely, an archival repository for Wales' history.

This thesis has shown that the NLW is not an indicator of a shift in popular perceptions of national identities, but an expression of a select group of elites' conception who had appropriated the NLW model for their own purpose. Those involved were motivated by a desire for influence, and were also few in number, so cannot be taken as representative of a broader national identity. To conclude, this work has revealed that the establishment of the library does not indicate a nationwide appetite for nationalistic cultural projects, but the existence of a class-based Welsh nationalism which was predominantly cultivated by the middle class.

## **II. National Libraries and National Identities**

This thesis is part of a recent trend to broaden library history. It has positioned a study of the inner workings of the library within a wider context which encompasses the political, cultural, ideological and social shifts that occurred during this period. This approach has been applied to only a small number of studies of national libraries, but is key in determining to what extent national libraries play a role in nation-building and to question



if there is a connection between a rise in cultural or political nationalism (or both) with the establishment of these types of institutions.

A comprehensive investigation into how individuals interacted with the NLW, be it as founders, subscribers, managers or users, reveals that people have multifaceted connections to an institution such as the NLW. The motivation to connect can be driven by a variety of factors: research, a nationalistic agenda, a need to be in a position of power, a desire to contribute to a local campaign, social mobility, leisure pursuits, and so on. In reality, the unravelling of these complex networks of individuals can be challenging, but has the potential to yield more nuanced results than a study that is only based on the aspirations of those managing an institution. In Alistair Black's words, library history's purpose is 'to tell...us about historic societies and not historic libraries', and this is only possible by locating libraries within a cultural conception.<sup>10</sup>

An understanding of a cultural conception(s) of nation in Wales during this period was fundamental to this study because it provided a framework in which to interrogate the three key stages of the NLW's evolution. Only a limited number of studies have interrogated the potential for a library to be utilised by those seeking to (re)invent national identities or as an indicator of a shift in popular perceptions of national identity, so much work remains to be done.

The main purpose of a national library is that it should house a nation's memory so its collection should go some way to representing a nation as a whole. In the case of the NLW, it was appropriated by a national elite with a particularly narrow view of what Wales' memory should consist of. However, the NLW is just one example, therefore it would be worthwhile investigating the genesis of other national libraries to explore if they

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<sup>10</sup> Alistair Black, 'New Methodologies in Library History: a Manifesto for the 'New' Library History', *Library History*, Vol.11, No.1 (1995), pp.76-85, pp.77, 80.

are the product of a mass movement and offer a broader representation of a nation, or if they are also a pet project of political and cultural elites with a particular national agenda.

National libraries are usually considered individually, so a critical comparative study of a selection of national libraries which draws thematic connections between institutions would be of value. Like nationalism, national library formation arose in different times in geographical contexts so a larger study could further explore to what extent a national library actively inculcates a sense of national identity or whether it is an expression of a general upswing in national sentiment.

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### **Online Resources**

Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/>)

Bodleian Library Website (<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>)

Cardiff University Information Services (<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk>)

Cymru 1914 Website (<http://cymru1914.org>)

Dictionary of Welsh Biography Online, National Library of Wales (<http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/index.html>)

Find My Past Website (<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/>)

Learned Society of Wales Website (<https://www.learnedsociety.wales>)

National Library of Wales Website (<https://www.llgc.org.uk/>)

Vision of Britain through Time Website (<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/datavalue/687194>)

What Middletown Read Website (<http://www.bsu.edu/libraries/wmr/>)

## **Appendix One: Biographies of Key Individuals**

### **Ballinger, John (1860-1933)**

John Ballinger was the first librarian of the National Library of Wales (NLW). He was born in Monmouthshire into a non-Welsh speaking family. His father died when Ballinger was six so he only remained in school until the age of fourteen. He began his library career at fifteen as an assistant at Cardiff Free Library. In 1880 he became head librarian at Doncaster Library and then returned to Cardiff in 1884 as chief librarian. During his twenty-four year tenure at Cardiff the number of books borrowed each year increased from 7,000 to 750,000. In collaboration with the library committee Ballinger increased the library's purchasing of books and manuscripts, particularly those relating to Wales and the Welsh language. He authored and co-authored a number of significant bibliographies and catalogues on Welsh books, music and bibles. However, his passion was education and he was keen to introduce children's reading halls into libraries and schools. He was president of the Library Association in 1922 and was editor of the *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society* for a number of years. Ballinger's impact on the library service in Wales is regarded as significant as he was at the helm of the two largest libraries in Wales for over forty-five years.

### **Davies, John Humphreys (1871-1926)**

John Humphreys Davies was a bibliographer and educationalist. He attended the University College of Wales (UCW) and Oxford where he became interested in Welsh literature and culture after becoming acquainted with Thomas Edward Ellis who later became his brother-in-law. He was a Justice of the Peace for the county of Cardiganshire and in 1905 was appointed registrar at UCW. Davies played a prominent role in the NLW campaign and on various library committees once the institution was established. He also donated his substantial personal library named Cwrtmawr to the NLW. Between 1910 and 1920 Davies edited the *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society* and in 1919 he was made principal of UCW.

### **Edwards, Thomas Charles (1837-1900)**

Thomas Charles Edwards was the first principal of the UCW in Aberystwyth which opened in 1872. He attended Oxford in the 1860s and was ordained in 1864. He became a preacher in Liverpool where he was extremely popular, combining a religious zeal with a learned approach. He also continued to travel and preach throughout Wales. In 1890 he completed a fundraising trip through North America to raise money for the college library. He was the son of Lewis Edwards, principal of the Bala Calvinistic Methodist College, and he succeeded his father as principal in 1891. He was also a keen bibliophile.

### **Ellis, Thomas Edward (1859-1899)**

Thomas Edward Ellis was the MP for Merioneth, 1886-1899. He attended UCW and Oxford. He was one of the founding members of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Cymdeithas which was a society for Welsh students promoting Welsh language and literature. Ellis played a prominent role in the Welsh Intermediate and Technical Education Act (1889) and was a keen advocate for a national museum and library for Wales. He revived the campaign for a NLW in 1896, but died suddenly in 1899 before the project came to fruition.

### **Evans, John Gwenogvryn (1852-1930)**

John Gwenogvryn Evans was a palaeographer and, from 1894, the Inspector of Welsh Manuscripts for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. He was ordained as a Unitarian

minister in 1876 but he was forced to give up this profession in 1880 due to health problems. Whilst living in Oxford, he attended the lectures of the Celtic scholar John Rhys and was inspired to study and later transcribe early Welsh manuscripts such as *Llyfr Coch Hergest* ('The Red Book of Hergest'). From 1887 he authored a series of diplomatic editions of medieval Welsh texts. In his role as Inspector of Welsh Manuscripts he produced an extensive two volume report which is still used by scholars today. Evans was John Williams' key advisor and negotiator during the purchasing of the Peniarth Manuscripts which became a significant part of the NLW's nucleus collection. He was a member of both the UCW and the NLW's court and council.

#### **Lewis, John Herbert (1858-1933)**

John Herbert Lewis was a lawyer and politician. He was educated at McGill University in Montreal and Oxford, entering Parliament in 1892 as a Liberal representing the borough of Flintshire. He was close to David Lloyd George and Thomas Edward Ellis. Lewis used every opportunity to bring Welsh matters before Parliament and campaigned for several years for Wales to be awarded a national museum and library grant. He was the NLW's first vice-president and became the president in 1926 following the death of John Williams.

#### **Owen, Hugh (1804-1881)**

Hugh Owen was an educationalist and played a key role in the founding of the UCW in Aberystwyth. In the 1840s he was appointed an agent for the British and Foreign Schools Society for the whole of Wales. He was also part of the movement to establish a Normal College at Bangor in 1856 and a similar institution for women in Swansea. Owen was one of the honorary secretaries of the committee formed in 1856 to establish a UCW. He retired in 1872 and devoted much of his time to promoting and developing the university. Owen was also involved in reforming both the Eisteddfod (a Welsh cultural festival) and the London based Welsh group the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion.

#### **Thomas, Daniel Lleufer (1863-1940)**

Daniel Lleufer Thomas was a stipendiary magistrate. In 1883 he enrolled at Oxford and graduated in 1887 in jurisprudence. He was one of the founding members of the Dafydd ap Gwilym Society. He joined the South Wales magistrate circuit in 1889 and continued to pursue his literary and historical interests. He took an active role in establishing a law department at UCW and wrote the statement submitted to the Privy Council committee in favour of Aberystwyth as the location for the NLW. Thomas also worked tirelessly to raise money for the NLW building fund in the mining communities of South Wales. From 1915 to 1919 he was president of the Workers' Educational Association in Wales.

#### **Williams, John (1840-1926)**

John Williams was a physician and regarded as the principal founder of the NLW. He attended the University of Glasgow and then trained at University College Hospital London. He practiced in Swansea and London where he was the court physician to Queen Victoria. Throughout his professional career he invested in a substantial private library of books, manuscripts and prints, primarily of Welsh interest. He returned to Wales – first to Carmarthenshire and then to Aberystwyth – to further pursue his Welsh cultural interests. In 1898 he purchased the Peniarth manuscripts which he vowed to donate to the planned NLW, but only if it was established at Aberystwyth. The Peniarth collection was made up predominately of Welsh language manuscripts and established by the antiquarian Robert Vaughan (c.1592-1667) at Hengwrt in Merionethshire. The library remained at Hengwrt until 1859 when it was bequeathed to W.W.E. Wynne who

transferred the collection to his home at Peniarth and then sold them to Williams in 1898. Williams was part of the library campaign committee and became the NLW's first president, a position he held until his death. Alongside the Peniarth collection he also bequeathed a large part of his own private library (later known as the Llanstephan manuscripts).

## **Appendix Two: The Volunteers**

This Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded PhD has been assisted by an innovative collaboration between the Open University (OU) and the NLW, so the majority of the research has been conducted at the library. The supervisors of this project were keen for the library to be involved with the research and saw it as an opportunity to produce meaningful shared outputs. Following the discovery of the subscribers' lists and the readers' registers it became clear that this information could be augmented with the 1911 UK Census, using database tools to analyse these as two complete datasets. However, the amount of data entry and census searching was going to restrict how much of this information could realistically be extracted and analysed by one person. Prof. Lorna Hughes suggested recruiting NLW volunteers to help with the process, which was then authorised by the OU's research degrees office with some stipulations: that all of the decisions in relation to the data would be made by the PhD student and that a system would be put in place to monitor and check accuracy of data entry.

A proposal was then submitted to the NLW volunteering steering committee which authorised the recruitment of five volunteers to work on the project for different periods. The volunteers included two linguistics students, a graduate with a degree in history, a retired administrator and a retired head teacher. The library stipulated that there needed to be meaningful training opportunities for the volunteers during their time on the scheme. Therefore the project focused on data entry skills, palaeography skills and how to effectively use the census search tools. In addition, the project culminated in a public presentation on the early readers as part of the library's lecture series during which three of the volunteers contributed.

Attending two courses at the Institute of Historical Research specifically on databases for historians improved the overall design of the database. The readers'



database contained three relational tables for the readers/census information, the reading material/online catalogue information and the transaction data which brought together the reader code and item on a particular date. The subscribers' database was simpler, using just one table for all of the data. The forms for both databases were developed so the volunteers could enter the data more easily and the introduction of a large numbers of look-up fields improved overall accuracy.

The final decisions relating to the data including, for example, whether it could definitely be said that a reader matched a census record or which imprint of a book title should be entered were not made by the volunteers but by myself. In addition, all census forms were saved so they could be easily checked if a query arose later on. The inputted data was checked regularly for errors, but overall the accuracy levels were high and the volunteers were extremely conscientious.

The initial motivation behind establishing this volunteer project was to collect a larger data sample that could not be achieved alone, but, in reality, working with the volunteers became an integral part of the PhD experience. The project offered the volunteers an opportunity to develop their skill set, but, as a group, they also brought a wealth of skills to the project. Four out of the five were fluent Welsh speakers which was vital for reading handwriting, both in the register and on the census forms. Their expertise improved the accuracy of the text entered and meant that more of the subscribers and readers were located on the census.

Three of the volunteers had lived in the area for a number of years so between them they had a wealth of local knowledge. As the majority of the subscribers and readers were from the local area, their knowledge of significant local families, alternative spellings of place names as well as an array of contacts was a huge benefit to the project as a whole. In addition, two of the volunteers were keen family historians, so already had an understanding of the genealogy software and how to effectively use the search tools.

The work with the volunteers felt like a natural extension of the existing collaboration between the OU and the NLW. It was genuinely thrilling to, together, discover more about these individuals' lives and unearth books which had been forgotten by time. These revelations, in a sense, connected the modern users of the library with those of the past. In general, when volunteering is discussed the emphasis is placed on the benefits for the volunteers in participating in these projects. Of course this skills development is vital, but it is also important to emphasise that this knowledge exchange is reciprocal as volunteers themselves have much to contribute, as exemplified by this project.

